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"TIME AND CHARACTERS IN FAULKNER: A SELECTIVE STUDY"

by

(C) Elizabeth A. Nicholls

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Time and Characters in Faulkner: A Selected Study", submitted by Elizabeth A. Nicholls in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Supervisor

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ABSTRACT

Faulkner's structural and thematic interest in time is well known. Less critical attention has been paid to the ways in which Faulkner's characters reflect this concern. This thesis undertakes to examine selected characters with respect to time consciousness. In many cases, Faulkner's experimentations in first-person and multiple narration make this relationship central to our appreciation of the author's art; we participate directly in the characters' experience of time.

Chapter One reviews Faulkner's major philosophical links with the subject of time, and delineates in broad outline various concepts and categories of time revealed in the characters of the Faulknerian novel--in their conscious, intellectual efforts to analyze time, and in their subjective relationships with social, natural and historical environment. Acknowledging the serious difficulties inherent in any attempt to define time absolutely, this chapter seeks, rather, to organize descriptively Faulkner's literary uses of time which pertain to character in order to facilitate the clear use of convenient terminology in the thesis.

Chapter Two deals with time contrasts to be found within the characters of Sanctuary. Although not representative of Faulkner's most sophisticated fiction, Sanctuary is useful to the present study because its characters are unequivocally associated with certain time concepts, and are deployed in the novel in a contrastive way.

Chapter Three analyzes the characters of The Sound and the

Fury and Light in August, with frequent reference to other Faulknerian characters, in order to illustrate the predisposition to do battle with finite time through idealization, for example, or obsessive appeal to the past. Time here has an increasingly subjective import, and those characters who represent alternatives to direct confrontation with finite time will be shown, generally, to have a close affiliation with natural, cyclical time.

Chapter Four seeks to demonstrate a broader vision of time which emerges from the time consciousness of individual characters and their social or racial groups. The sense of history, the development of legend, the uses of ritual are, essentially, aspects of a time perspective which links the individual to a kind of time beyond his own mortality. The characters of Sartoris are examined first; the Sartoris family has a very singular attachment to the past, and many of the other characters of the novel understand quite differently the nature of time. Absalom, Absalom! represents not only the documentary result of a collaborative effort to understand the historical past, but reveals a single-minded attempt on the part of an individual character to establish himself as legendary. One of Faulkner's most complex works, Absalom, Absalom!, is based on the interaction of time consciousness on the individual and social level. Finally, legend and history will be considered as a framework for Go Down, Moses, in which man confronts nature.

The last chapter summarizes the psychological and moral implications of time consciousness in Faulkner's characters.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
CHAPTER I	1
CHAPTER II	20
CHAPTER III	33
CHAPTER IV	74
CHAPTER V	120
LIST OF WORKS USEFUL TO THIS STUDY	127

When the shadow of the sash appeared on the curtains it was between seven and eight o'clock and then I was in time again.

The Sound and the Fury, p. 93

CHAPTER I--INTRODUCTION

William Faulkner said of his novels in a 1955 interview that ". . . I created a cosmos of my own. I can move these people around, not only in space but in time too."[1] Certainly, the idea of the novel as a spatio-temporal microcosm is hardly exclusive to Faulkner. Of necessity, every novel creates space and operates in and according to some concept of time. What is characteristically Faulknerian are the particular vividness and textural wealth of his spatial world,[2] and the extent to which the novels are informed by a preoccupation with the whole dimension of time, not only as a physical framework for the storyteller but as a stylistic and thematic concern. Although Faulkner is a particularly reluctant and often misleading interpreter of his own novels, and the authorial point of view is often extremely difficult to discern, Sartre is able to assert with confidence that "it is immediately obvious that Faulkner's metaphysics is a metaphysics of time."[3]

Despite the assumption of this study that Faulkner's novels are overwhelmingly literary creations and that one cannot with any degree of certainty point to a consistent and tractable body of metaphysical thought with which they might be imbued, the novels themselves provide immediate and unforgettable evidence of a concern with the subject of time. Visual images of passing time abound:

clocks, watches, bells, shadows, schedules, seasonal symbols. Sections of The Sound and the Fury, for example, are dated rather than titled.[4] The reader, too, is likely to become at once aware of Faulkner's more radical formal departures. Chronology, and hence causality, which organize traditional narrative exposition and development, have often been abandoned as the presiding time structure, in favour of systems of multiple narration and point of view; the reader experiences continual time shifts and abrupt dislocations of present and past. Absalom, Absalom!, for example, is a collaborative attempt, on the part of several characters, established in several different time frameworks, to reconstruct, to interpret, and possibly to create certain historical events. As I Lay Dying is composed of a series of dramatic monologues describing a bizarre chain of events from the points of view of various spectators and participants, each with a particular vision of reality and grasp of time. The sections of The Sound and the Fury are not only defined by points of view located differently in time, but they reflect, in their internal organization, the particular time consciousness of their narrators, as numerous critical studies have noted.[5] Light in August, too, though a less overtly experimental work than The Sound and the Fury, presents a number of co-plots interwoven within the symmetrical confines of Lena's journey; the time structures of these co-plots derive from the points of view of the characters chiefly involved -- Lena, Joe Christmas, Hightower and Byron Bunch -- and not from the external demands of coherent storytelling.

Many of the novels are characterized by the absence, indeed

the deliberate obliteration, of a chronological time structure imposed by some external authorial stance. Significant time, for Faulkner, is a predominantly psychological phenomenon, and when Faulkner says that he "can move these characters about . . . in time too," the vehicle he uses is the minds of the characters themselves. As St. Augustine suggested in Book XI of The Confessions, time does not constitute an absolute by which one can externally verify one's knowledge, but rather "Could it not be, I wonder, an extension of the mind itself?".[6] It is as an "extension of the mind" that time finds its most significant applications in the Faulknerian novel, and we see time through the eyes of a succession of memorable characters. The reader immediately experiences difficulty in consistently applying the concept of time as sequential, as an orderly narrated progression of discrete moments in which the future becomes the present and the present becomes past. Sartre has noted in his essay on The Sound and the Fury that "in Faulkner's work there is never any progression, never anything which comes from the future. The present has not first been a future possibility. . . . No, to be present means to appear without any reason and to sink in."[7] Sartre's view of Faulknerian time, as will be shown in the course of this paper, does not, perhaps, sufficiently take into account Faulkner's insistence on the cycles of nature as promises of future time. However, Sartre does recognize, first, that striking quality of suspension, of stasis, frequently found in the novels, and secondly, the predicament of those Faulknerian characters whose links to the past wholly absorb their energies and rob them of future possibilities.

Faulkner is considerably intrigued by the ways in which past, present and future are related. It is to this problem that Henri Bergson addresses himself with his concept of "duration."[8] He defines duration as intuitive time, or time apprehended by the intuition. As opposed to the mathematical spatialized time of the intellect, duration can never be constructed in terms of instants, just as movement can never be constructed of points.[9] Bergson observes that "the [psychical] state, taken in itself, is a perpetual becoming," and from this extracts "Becoming in general, that is, a becoming which is not the becoming of any particular thing, and this is what I have called the time the state occupies."

The Bergsonian concept of time, then, has much to say about the experience of the Faulknerian novel, in which time, the consciousness of both reader and characters, and hence form, are so closely linked.[10] Certainly, one of the Faulknerian phenomena to which Bergson's discussion points is the overlapping of time past, present and future. "Without this survival of the past into the present there would be no duration but only instantaneity."[11] Augustine suggested this co-existence in referring to a present of things past (memory), a present of things present (sight), and a present of things future (expectation).[12] Ike Snopes of The Hamlet is perhaps the ultimate exponent of Bergsonian, fluid, non-intellectualized time. Time, for Ike, is not a rational construct imposed upon the world around him, but a kind of direct intuitive experience of the world in which past, present and future are essentially indistinguishable.

Faulkner said in an interview that "I agree pretty much with

Bergson's theory of the fluidity of time. There is only the present moment in which I include both the past and the future and that is eternity."[13] Certainly, Faulkner's most powerful style reflects this rejection of spatialized and intellectualized time. Conrad Aiken finds in Faulkner's involuted, often obtuse style an "elaborate method of deliberately withheld meaning, of progressive and partial and delayed disclosure"[14] designed to keep the form in a fluid state of becoming rather than a final static state of being. Like Bergson, Faulkner is ultimately concerned with the continuity of time.

> What Mr. Faulkner is after, in a sense, is a continuum. He wants a medium without stops or pauses, a medium which is always of the moment, and of which the passage from moment to moment is as fluid and undetectable as in the life itself which he is purporting to give. It is all inside and underneath, or as seen from within and below; the reader must therefore be steadily drawn in. . . .[15]

Warren Beck, too, in his essay on Faulkner's style, suggests that a cumulative effect of time's simultaneity is the object of the author's convolutions, repetitions, interpolations, speculations, and alternate possibilities.

> In his most characteristic writing Faulkner is trying to render the transcendent life of the mind, the crowded composite of associative and analytical consciousness which expands the vibrant moment into the reaches of all time, simultaneously observing, remembering, interpreting, and modifying. . . .[16]

Faulkner is attempting to give his prose fiction "the instantaneous complexities of consciousness itself."[17]

Critical study has not failed to acknowledge the significance of the past, and more particularly of the relationship of past and present, in many of the novels. In fact, in any discussion of Faulkner's

most effective and unified novels, the subject of time generally, and the past more particularly, seems inevitably to be involved. From Sartre's view of the contingency of meaning upon pastness,[18] to the perpetual presence of the past, which has been seen by Hyatt Waggoner,[19] to the extra-temporality of the past discussed by Jean Pouillon,[20] the role of the past has been recognized as significant thematically and structurally in Faulkner. However, most of these studies examine the past or the present as a certain body of events, and are less concerned with the processes themselves, primarily psychological in derivation, by which one becomes the other in the consciousness of the characters. The Faulknerian character is above all a creature of time whose misfortune, as Sartre indicates, "lies in his being time-bound,"[21] or rather, perhaps, in his awareness of that condition. The relationship between direct experience and rational analysis of time on the part of the character will be of central importance to this paper.

It is interesting that the novels in which time is most vital form the core of what might be referred to as the Yoknapatawpha canon of Faulkner, that group most particularized in terms of space, most characteristically "Southern".[22] Too, the individual novels overlap in curious ways. Characters recur (sometimes slightly altered), situations and events are used as points of reference, families rise and fall, the generations sweep by. In this larger design, time takes on a new, historical dimension, one with reverberations of legend and myth. It is for this reason that Faulkner includes a number of carefully detailed, dated genealogical charts. They provide a realization in terms of time analagous to the spatial world confirmed by the maps.

Yoknapatawpha's past, it will be discovered, extends in shadowy fashion back to the primacy of the wilderness and its Indian aristocracy. As a microcosm of the South, Yoknapatawpha has an historical past of heroic deeds perpetrated within the framework of an absolutist code, and a racial past of Negro, White and Indian strains, each with generally discernible characteristics with respect to time. Certain broader perspectives on time, then, emerge from the novels considered as a group.

Because of the rather abstruse and elusive nature of the philosophical concept of time,[23] it is useful at this point to delineate Faulkner's uses of time in generally contrastive terms with the understanding that some overlapping of categories is inevitable. What might simply be referred to in the broadest sense as objective and subjective time are constantly juxtaposed in the novels. Objective time might be described as external time, external to the consciousness of the character, and of which motion and change are the measurable manifestations. This is the Lockean definition of time as "duration set out by measure"[24] and includes both the time structures of nature (day and night, the seasons) and the spatialized man-made chronology of machines (the distance between two clock hands). Subjective time is inner or psychological and refers to man's intuitional grasp of a continuous indivisible time to which mathematical forms of measurement are inappropriate.[25] Subjective time is "measured," or rather evoked, by the individualized significance, meaning or intensity it encompasses.

Psychological time as part of the individual consciousness

is, of course, indispensible to Faulkner's most characteristic literary technique, that of insisting that the reader experience the world of the novel for himself through the eyes of the character, instead of presenting this world as the accomplished fact of an omniscient point of view. It is the absence of a time structure based on those conventions of external objective time which accounts for what Maurice Coindreau (one of Faulkner's earliest exponents) calls "ce caractère hallucinent qui fait qu'un liver de Faulkner peut malaisément s'oublier."[26]

> On ne peut séparer de la technique faulknérienne les types qui lui donnent sa raison d'exister. Il y a en effet concordance absolue entre les personnages et la façon dont ils sont présentés.

The contrast between objective and subjective time finds vivid illustration in the case of Rosa Coldfield in Absalom, Absalom!. That instant in which Thomas Sutpen makes his proposal to her (forty-three years prior to the "present" of the novel) does not cease but remains perpetually present to her. Those forty-three years are the duration of what was a single moment of clock time.[27]

Of course, to associate natural and mechanical time in a single concept of objective or external time for the purposes of categorization is to ignore that the natural and the mechanical are continually contrasted in Faulkner. Characters and their external environments (historical, racial, social) are frequently presented in terms of affinity for one or the other. Mechanical time, "the minute clicking of little wheels," as has been suggested, is spatialized time, measured by machines, in direct opposition to Bergson's "duration". As a kind of artificial, rationalized construct, it is measured as

time passing and therefore, in effect, time lost.[28] Faulkner presents mechanical time in images of clocks, watches, bells, etc. intruding divisively on both nature and the consciousness of the characters. Agents of this type of time are generally seen to be morally imperfect. Jason of The Sound and the Fury and Popeye of Sanctuary, both closely associated with mechanical time, are among Faulkner's most despicable characters.

Natural time is seen as having a much more beneficent influence; a close association with the cycles of nature tends to preclude the corruptions affiliated with mechanical time. Eliot describes this natural time in the Four Quartets:

> And under the oppression of the silent fog
> The tolling bell
> Measures time not our time, rung by the unhurried
> Ground swell, a time
> Older than the time of chronometers . . .[29]

This is the time of the sea, for it is the ground swell of the ocean, not the clicking wheels, that causes this bell to ring. In its broadest sense, natural time becomes what I shall call universal or cosmic time. Time does not appear to be passing at all, and hence the compulsions associated with its loss are absent. Two stages might be delineated in Faulkner: the first is that condition of "motion without progress," described by Sartre as a "frozen speed at the very heart of things."[30] Change and motion are almost imperceptible -- no absolute standard of time exists by which to measure them. The wagon moving infinitesimally toward Lena Grove at the beginning of Light in August is a memorable example.[31]

The second state is simply a more advanced degree of the

first, a complete stasis with respect to the passage of time. The essence of this vision of timelessness is to be found in Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn", one of Faulkner's favourite and most frequently used literary sources. Time is frozen at a particular moment, often the moment of maximum motion, or as in the Ode, maximum desire. This is the Faulknerian equivalent of Proust's "instantané," the arrested instant of time, or "snapshot," which yields a sensation of timelessness through a sudden recognition of the past inhabiting the present.[32]

The sense of this basic contrast between mechanical and "universal" time is strikingly realized in certain motifs. Human civilization as a consumer of mechanical time is constantly juxtaposed to and dwarfed by the wilderness, against which all the normal tools of mechanical time prove inadequate. Old Ben, the great bear of Go Down, Moses, partakes of this timeless quality of the wilderness (although he is not immortal).[33] The same type of contrast is frequently developed between urban and rural life. The latter is more closely associated with the time cycles of nature, while the former exhibits the compulsive pursuits and pressures of chronological measurement. Faulkner senses that the Negro and the White collective visions of time are essentially opposed, an opposition signalled by, for one thing, a contrast of pace. Negroes in general are presented as possessing a static and tranquil quality foreign to the white man. The Negro is integrated into natural time on land he does not own, while the white man exploits mechanical time for immediate profit.[34]

Another dichotomy of time to be found in the novels might be termed finite versus infinite time. Finite time has a beginning

and an end, essentially the "In my beginning is my end" of Eliot's "East Coker."[35] The individual human life, of course, is an extension of finite time. Two aspects of finite time which haunt many of Faulkner's characters are the irreversibility of such time and the sense of loss which accompanies an often obsessional awareness of human impermanence. Faulkner said in an interview that "There is no such thing as 'was' only 'is.' If 'was' existed there would be no grief or sorrow."[36] Finite time insists on the pastness of the past which, as Faulkner indicates, leads to a sense of loss, of "grief or sorrow." The despair of the Faulkner character is that time may be the "reducto ad absurdum of all human experience."[37] In the face of constant change, the present loses significance, and hence the continual juxtaposition in the minds of many characters of the imperfect and unsatisfactory present and an ideal Golden Age past.

Infinite time presents two aspects in Faulkner. One of these is circular (the unending cycles of the seasons, for example) and the other is a linear vision in which the past and future extend infinitely on either side of the present moment. Quentin Compson of The Sound and the Fury, looking at the water into which he will jump to extinguish his human time, contemplates a river of infinite time into which he will immerse himself to become impervious to the changes associated with finite time. The vision of infinite time, then, involves either the psychological state of a character who might acutely sense the existence of a time framework in opposition to his own state of human mortality, or it involves inheritance. Guilt, according to Faulkner, is capable of transmission from generation to generation

indefinitely and is never diluted, as are all other human attributes, through the passage of time.

> People change and smile, but the agony abides.
> Time the destroyer is time the preserver.[38]

In respect of this inescapable inheritance of the tainted blood of the past, Faulkner's closest progenitor in American literature is Nathaniel Hawthorne. "It is a truth . ... that no great mistake, whether acted or endured, in our mortal sphere is ever really set right. Time, the continual vicissitude of circumstances and invariable opportunity of death, render it impossible."[39]

With the wealth, then, of basically undivided critical judgment asserting the importance of time (for however various of reasons) to theme, style and structure, this thesis does not seek to argue that time provides a significant channel of insight into Faulkner's craft. It assumes that this is, in fact, the case. The present study will be directed toward the definition, description and interpretation of those literary uses of time most closely pertaining to the presentation and development of character. If, as has been suggested, the reader is often forced to participate in the world of the novel through the eyes of one or more characters, the way they sense time and organize their experiences in terms of time is a powerful means of defining our experience of the characters themselves. Thus, the relationship between character and time is a central aspect of psychological assessment in Faulkner. Dealing in depth with his vast literary output is, however, simply beyond the scope of this study. Rather, the thesis will deal with a selected (and necessarily limited) group of those

characters in whom time consciousness is most dramatic and revealing.

The characters of Sanctuary will be examined first because their delineation is relatively straight-forward and their representativeness as exponents of those categories of time already mentioned is unmistakeable. The two-dimensionality of characters such as Popeye, Temple, and, largely, of Horace Benbow, facilitates the reader's appreciation of them as moral types, manipulated by the author, to a great extent, on the basis of the kind of time they embody. Too, the contrast between mechanical and natural time is presented in a particularly overt fashion here; man's lack of harmony with nature has disastrous consequences.

Chapter Three will deal with time as a much more subjective phenomenon. Characters who see finite time as enemy to the human condition and who order their experiences accordingly, will be examined here, as will those characters who provide antithetical or alternative insights. Quentin Compson of The Sound and the Fury and Reverend Hightower of Light in August provide a focal point for the discussions of this chapter; they exhibit par excellence the distress of the Faulknerian character of intellectual bent who is predisposed to do battle with finite time, and so attempt, with varying degrees of success, to avoid the nihilism of a Mr. Compson. Darl of As I Lay Dying, who escapes time, ultimately, in madness, is included in this chapter, and the violence and cruelty, respectively, of Joe Christmas and Jason Compson are examined in the light of their views of time. A larger vision of time is invoked in the figure of Dilsey, who reveals a sense of time which is creative and humane. Lena Grove of Light in

August and Eula Varner of The Hamlet will be discussed as embodying to the fullest extent natural, cyclical time with its associated air of timeless suspension. The Sound and the Fury and Light in August are of particular interest in Chapter Three. In the case of the former, the four sections of the novel are each informed by a manifestly different time sense -- it is more rewarding to define one vision of time in the light of the others. The major characters of the latter, grouped into several plots, are impelled, both individually and in their interactions, by experiences of time which differ greatly, and which offer highly contrastive insights into the problematic nature of finitude.

Chapter Four will deal with some larger perspectives on time which derive both from individual characters and groups, and which transcend, occasionally, even the boundaries of single novels. The development of legend and the uses of ritual derive their significance from the views of time which they imply. By means of legend and ritual the individual is made aware of his relationship to a kind of time which is not to be contained within a single life span. The characters of Sartoris will be discussed here; their very striking links with the past are symptomatic of a particular time consciousness. Absalom, Absalom! will be examined both as an account of a concentrated attempt to create legend, on the part of Thomas Sutpen, and to understand the historical past, on the part of the narrators of the novel. The interaction of individual and social pasts is of particular concern in Absalom, Absalom!. Finally, these same time themes will briefly be considered as forming the framework of Go Down, Moses,

emphasizing the role of nature, and especially the wilderness, in broader, social visions of time.

FOOTNOTES--CHAPTER I

[1]James B. Meriwether and Michael Millgate, eds., Lion in the Garden: Interviews with William Faulkner 1926-1962 (New York: Random House, 1968), p. 255.

[2]The extent of Faulkner's spatial realization is confirmed by the fact that he was able to provide maps, albeit occasionally inaccurate, of his Yoknapatawpha County.

[3]Jean-Paul Sartre, Literary Essays (New York: Philosophical Library, 1957), p. 79. Sartre asserts that "a fictional technique always relates back to the novelist's metaphysics." This, however, applies more to philosophical novelists such as Sartre himself than to purely literary figures such as Faulkner.

[4]"April Seventh, 1928," "June Second, 1910," "April Sixth, 1928," and "April Eighth, 1928."

[5]This observation applies, of course, more to the first three sections, which are first-person, than to Dilsey's section.

[6]Augustine, The Confessions, trans. Rex Warner (New York: The New American Library, 1963), Book XI, p. 279.

[7]Sartre, p. 81. Not only does Faulknerian time, for Sartre, not flow from future to past, but the reverse often appears to be the case. This, in a sense, decapitates time. Ibid., p. 84.

[8]Henri Bergson, An Introduction to Metaphysics, 2nd ed., trans. T.E. Hulme (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1949), p. 41.

[9]The problem of space and/or time, seen as a series of indivisible instants, has a long and notorious history, beginning with the atomists of Ancient Greece (Democritus and eventually the Pythagoreans, Parmenides and Zeno). Zeno's paradoxes were based on the assumption that movement can be represented by positing space in terms of points. That this is impossible did not keep the best minds from discovering the flaw in Zeno's logic until the 19th century. For an analysis of this type of fallacy, which, Bergson asserts, derives from our inability to distinguish between analysis and intuition, see Bergson, p. 43.

[10]The problem of the relationship between space and time for the novelist interests Lawrence Durrell. In his introduction to Balthazar, Durrell states that the four novels of the Alexandria Quartet represent his attempt to create a "form based on the relativity proposition," which asserts "three sides of space and one of time. . . . The three first parts . . . are to be deployed spatially (hence the use of 'sibling' not 'sequel') and are not linked in a serial form.

They interlap, interweave, in a purely spatial relation. Time is stayed. The fourth part alone will represent time and be a true sequel. . . . This is not Proustian or Joycean method -- for they illustrate Bergsonian Duration in my opinion, not 'Space-Time.' Balthazar (London: Faber, 1958), p. 7. It is interesting that Bergson's arguments have generally received a more favourable reception in the literary than in the philosophical domaine. Writers such as Faulkner and Durrell have found Bergson eloquent and evocative, while his philosophical colleagues and descendants have frequently deplored his lack of systematic logic and precision. Thomas A. Goudge, in his introduction to Bergson's Introduction to Metaphysics quotes Santayana's observation of Bergson that he "is persuasive without argument," p. 20.

[11]Bergson, p. 41. "Inner duration is the continuous life of a memory which prolongs the past into the present, the present either containing within it in a distinct form the ceaselessly growing image of the past, or more probably, showing by its continual change of quality the heavier and still heavier load we drag behind us as we grow older." Ibid., p. 40.

[12]Augustine, p. 282.

[13]Lion in the Garden, p. 70.

[14]Conrad Aiken, "William Faulkner: The Novel as Form," in Robert Penn Warren, ed., Faulkner: A Collection of Critical Essays, Twentieth Century Views (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1966), p. 48.

[15]Ibid., p. 48. See also Bergson's "pure mobility," Introduction to Metaphysics, p. 27.

[16]Warren Beck, "William Faulkner's Style," Faulkner: A Collection of Critical Essays, p. 62.

[17]Beck, ibid.

[18]Sartre, p. 82.

[19]Hyatt Waggoner, "Past as Present: Absalom, Absalom!," in Faulkner: A Collection of Critical Essays, p. 175.

[20]Jean Pouillon, "Time and Destiny in Faulkner," ibid., p. 79. Sartre, Waggoner, and Pouillon have been arbitrarily chosen in order to suggest that Faulkner's critics have ranged from "everything is past" to "nothing is past" in their analyses.

[21]Sartre, p. 79.

[22]Faulkner's first critical successes, which occurred in France,

were especially related to what the French critics considered his sense of territoriality. See Janet Flanner, Paris was Yesterday 1925-1939, ed. Irving Drutman (New York: Viking, 1972), pp. 116-117.

[23]As a subject for investigation the peculiar difficulties of time are almost insurmountable, for as immediately as we can focus our attention upon it, the present moment belongs to time past. As J.B. Priestley notes: "In this respect, pursuing Time, we are like the knight on a quest, condemned to wander through innumerable forests, bewildered and baffled, because the magic beast he is looking for is the horse he is riding." Priestley, Man and Time (New York: Dell, 1968), p. 57.

[24]J.J.C. Smart, ed., Problems of Space and Time (New York: Macmillan, 1964), p. 103.

[25]This is Bergson's "duration."

[26]Maurice Coindreau, "William Faulkner," Nouvelle Revue Francaise (June, 1931), p. 927.

[27]Isaac Newton in his Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy was able to assert with all confidence the existence of two categories of time: absolute (or true) time and relative (external) time. The former "flows equably without relation to anything external, and by another name is called duration." The latter is a sensible "measure of duration by the means of motion which is commonly used instead of true time." Quoted in Problems of Space and Time, p. 81. One is aware of this kind of division between pure and measured time in Faulkner although the concept of time as absolute is foreign to the novels. See also Augustine, The Confessions, Book XI, chapters 24-26, pp. 277-279, for a discussion of the problems inherent in measuring time, which he has already determined is "not the motion of a body." For a concise rejection of the absolute time posited by Newton, see Lucretius, On the Nature of Things, trans. Martin Ferguson Smith (London: Sphere Books, 1969), p. 46.

[28]"How do we measure present time since it has not extension? It is measured while it passes. . . . " Augustine, The Confessions, quoted in Problems of Space and Time, p. 63.

[29]T.S. Eliot, "The Dry Salvages," Four Quartets, in Collected Poems 1909-1962 (London: Faber, 1963), p. 206.

[30]Sartre, p. 81.

[31]Faulkner, Light in August (New York: Vintage Books, 1972), pp. 5-6. Hereafter cited as LA in parentheses within the body of the text.

[32]Richard P. Adams, Faulkner: Myth and Motion (Princeton:

Princeton University Press, 1962), identifies the frozen moment as a means of demonstrating the movement and time which surrounds it.

[33]Although not immortal, the bear is described several times as existing within a time framework so broad that he seems to have transcended mortality: he has been "absolved of mortality," Go Down, Moses (New York: The Modern Library, 1940), p. 194. Hereafter cited as GDM in parentheses within the body of the text. The hunt is referred to as the "yearly pageant-rite of the old bear's furious immortality," p. 194.

[34]The idea of ownership is seen to be inimical to nature. See Ike McCaslin's renunciation of land in Go Down, Moses. The fact that the Negro is generally not of the owning class is but one aspect of his harmony with nature.

[35]Eliot, "East Coker," Four Quartets, p. 196.

[36]Lion in the Garden, p. 255.

[37]Faulkner, The Sound and the Fury (New York: Vintage Books, 1929), p. 93. Hereafter cited as SF in parentheses within the body of the text.

[38]Eliot, "The Dry Salvages," Four Quartets, p. 209.

[39]Nathaniel Hawthorne, The House of the Seven Gables (New York: Norton, 1967), p. 313.

CHAPTER II

Sanctuary affords us, perhaps, Faulkner's most accessible if least skillful exploration of linear and cyclical, and mechanical and natural time juxtaposed, in a social landscape which is violent, hypocritical and corrupt. The assignment of moral values to the characters is, to a significant extent, reflected in their respective attitudes to and senses of time. The movement of the novel consists in the gradual assimilation on the part of the central character, Horace Benbow, of an awareness of an all-pervasive human evil. As his encounters with a morally bankrupt social environment proceed, this awareness displaces his idealistic concept of women as sanctuaries of purity and moral beauty, and in this regard he comes to discover the "pure dissimulation," the irreconcilable disparity between appearance and reality.

When Hawthorne's Goodman Brown[1] meets the devil and is induced, by the darker urgings of his own soul, to attend a mass of those bound together by sin, he gains a knowledge of "the deep mystery of sin,"[2] but the price is despair. Thereafter, he sees the earth as "one stain of guilt, one mighty blood spot." For Horace, too, the price of knowledge of evil is despair and the effect is a snowballing one: once the sanctuary of womanhood becomes in his eyes a temple of iniquity, he begins to see corruption everywhere. "Dammit, say what you want to, but there's a corruption about even looking upon evil, even by accident; you cannot haggle, traffic with putrefaction. . . ."[3]

The world of Sanctuary does indeed become "one mighty blood spot," where injustice, deceit and cruelty reign supreme. The protec-

tion of the sanctity of ideals becomes, inevitably, a battle against time and its concomitant changes. The construction of an ideal may be seen as an attempt to transcend or obstruct through abstraction the inexorable progression of human time, and Benbow finds that his ideals are weak fabrications; they cannot withstand the intrusion of temporal reality. As Eliot's "East Coker" suggests, immunity from the ongoing momentum of time and change cannot be bought by any form of abstract knowledge:

> The knowledge imposes a pattern and falsifies,
> For the pattern is new in every moment
> And every moment is a new and shocking
> Valuation of all we have been.[4]

Horace's marriage, for example, is not invulnerable to time. Ten years have reduced it to a weekly ordeal of dripping shrimp: "Here lies Horace Benbow in a fading series of small stinking spots on a Mississippi sidewalk" (San 24). He attributes this spiritual degeneration to the fact of his having married someone else's wife, so that meaningful reality is removed to a point ten years in the past. "When you marry somebody else's wife, you start off maybe ten years behind . . ." (San 23). It is difficult enough to deal with a sordid and trivial present, but virtually impossible to deal with an intractable past which cannot be abstracted, he finds, in terms of his ideals of womanly behavior. The past is distressingly impenetrable to the kind of mental construction with which he customarily deals with the world.

His stepdaughter, Little Belle, becomes the object of all his idealizing tendencies. He remembers her, for example, invariably dressed in white. Indisputable evidence of sexual appetites which deny her innocence ("the slain flowers") results in such devastating

disillusionment that he abandons his home altogether. Like Quentin Compson, Benbow's only possible retreat is into a past of prelapsarian innocence; he repeats with despairing impotence that "I just wanted a hill to lie on, you see. Then I would be all right" (San 23). This attempt to nullify linear time and its irreversible changes, to bypass the ignoble present in favour of a distant and idealized past, is the motivation for his refusal, against all financial practicality, to sell his boyhood home in Jefferson. The extent to which this movement into the idyllic past is a failure is indicated by the fact that Benbow's flight from Kinston leads him not to "a hill to lie on" far from the encroachments of time, but into the very heart of corruption, Old Frenchman Place, the embodiment of the "gutted ruin" of the South, and of the decay of those absolutes of honour and chastity upon which it was founded.

Even his sister Narcissa, who should represent a sanctuary of the timeless virtues of the past in contrast to both Kinston and Old Frenchman Place, is shown to have all the appearances of virtue and none of the substance.[5] Her static and timeless quality is exposed as nothing more than narrow and unfeeling shallow-mindedness, as "she . . . looked full at him, without outward surprise, with that serene and stupid impregnability of heroic statuary" (San 83). Far from being associated with any broader vision of time, Narcissa's interests are rigidly confined to the immediate present: "I don't think anything about it. I don't care. That's what people in town think. So it doesn't matter whether it's true or not" (San 134). It is, of course, not accidental that Narcissa should play so instrumen-

tal a role in perpetrating the injustice that leads to Goodwin's death. "'So the quicker he loses, the better it would be, wouldn't it?' she said. 'If they hung the man and got it over with' . . ." (San 188).

Horace's involvement, at first peripheral, with the horrible chain of events at Old Frenchman Place, brings him closer and closer to the maelstrom of an evil reality. It is an inescapable confrontation with the present, and even his belief in the ideal of justice does not survive. His defense of Goodwin is designed to revitalize his fading conviction that there are constants which are invulnerable to time. Goodwin has no real confidence in "the law, justice, civilization," but even he overestimates the legal possibility of rational and humane judgment based on the lack of evidence of guilt. "Let them prove I did it" (San 99).

Horace's exposure to Temple Drake confirms the disillusioning process which thrust his image of Little Belle into chronological time. He wishes desperately to remain in a world of timeless values -- womanly chastity and male honour -- in insisting that Temple left Old Frenchman Place unharmed. That he, by this time, cannot convince himself that this is true, is shown in his reaction to Little Belle's picture which previously had exuded whiteness and a "delicate essence of blossoming grape," and which now slips from its "precarious balancing" as an ideal:

> . . . he looked at the familiar image with a kind of horror and despair, at a face suddenly older in sin than he would ever be, a face more blurred than sweet, at eyes more secret than soft. In reaching for it, he knocked it flat. (San 123)

It is interesting to note that, when confronted by corruption, Horace continues to idealize; if virtue proves ephemeral, perhaps sin may constitute a timeless principle.

The full knowledge of Temple's rape and, in particular, her attitude of "naive and personal vanity," seal off any escape for Horace from the reality of the present and its unceasing changes. His despair at the universality of evil is intensified by his realization that nothing lasts in the world of human time, not even despair. Perhaps it is more true to say that in Sanctuary, only evil and its derivative guilt assume an aspect of eternal immutability. Like Quentin, Horace concludes that it is better to be dead: that is the only sure way to achieve some sort of victory over passing time, because the common denominator of all human passions, feelings and ideals is finitude. They exist for a brief moment on a linear scale.

> Perhaps it is upon the instant that we realize . . . that there is a logical pattern to evil, that we die, he thought, thinking of the expression he had once seen in the eyes of a dead child, and of other dead: the cooling indignation, the shocked despair fading . . . (San 159)

He transfers this awareness of finitude to the world itself; to regard the earth in terms of linear rather than of cyclical time is to envision, ultimately, the apocalypse, the "death" of time: "the chemical agony of a world left stark and dying" (San 160).

> . . . he knew suddenly that it was the friction of the earth on its axis, approaching that moment when it must decide to turn on or to remain forever still: a motionless ball in cooling space. . . . (San 160)

In Horace Benbow, then, we see an example of the Faulknerian character inimically opposed to and unable to cope with the flow of

time, who seeks refuge from time, more and more unsuccessfully, in intellectual constructs. This is the kind of static character (of whom Quentin Compson is an even more uncompromising example) that Adams, in Faulkner: Myth and Motion, examines as one of Faulkner's techniques for arresting time and motion in order to demonstrate more dynamically and intensely their course in human affairs.[6] Certainly, the ineffectual and backward-looking Horace is forced to compromise to some extent with the onward momentum of time by the shocking and violent immediacy of the present, but finally he is overcome by his overwhelming tendency to retreat from the lurid glare of the present and its compulsions to act.[7]

> Horace couldn't hear them. He couldn't hear the man who had got burned screaming. He couldn't hear the fire, though it still swirled upward unabated, as though it were living upon itself, and soundless: a voice of fury like in a dream, roaring silently out of a peaceful void. (San 209)

The contrast between the above passage which closes Chapter Twenty-nine and the opening of Chapter Thirty is an instructive one in terms of the vision of time with which Horace is associated. His retreat from the present is now complete as he returns to his wife in Kinston. Even the porter who meets him at the train station is a figure from the aristocratic past, "a planter, a landholder, son of one of the first settlers" (San 210). As far as Horace is concerned, time's capacity to contain human events is strictly limited; he accounts for his own despair as the result, not of a failure to understand the true nature of time as the source of universally compelling changes, but of a situation which strained time beyond its maximum extension.

> Time's not such a bad thing after all. Use it right, and you can stretch anything out, like a rubberband, until it busts somewhere; and there you are, with all tragedy and despair in two little knots between thumb and finger of each hand. (San 133)

He attributes his inability to deal with the present moment to the inefficacy of age, and his longing for some kind of sanctuary against time to a natural desire for peace and order. "I am sick. I am too old for this. I was born too old for it, and so I am sick to death for quiet" (San 186).

The contrast between natural and mechanical time and their respective agents is a formative one in Sanctuary. As Horace becomes increasingly obsessed by the omnipotence of time in the human domain, even nature, which elsewhere exudes a soothing quality of timelessness, comes to suggest finitude. The all-pervasive scent of honeysuckle which "writhes" across the world like "cold smoke" (San 160) evokes sexual corruption, and thus the temporary nature of one of Horace's most cherished ideals.[8] The "murmur of the wild grape," too, represents "that conspiracy between female flesh and female season" (San 21) to be changeable and deceitful.

Outstanding among a whole cast of lurid characters is Popeye, and in him we see the absolute equation of evil and the unnatural. Faulkner's most reprehensible characters seem to be those who are most alienated from nature and, certainly, everything about Popeye is artificial. He is a bootlegger who would be poisoned by alcohol (San 216), and a rapist who is incapable of sex. His life story is one long catalogue of crimes against nature. The very essence of Popeye is to be found in "that vicious depthless quality of stamped tin" (San 15)

and his alienation from nature extends to an active terror, a "vicious cringing," at the sound of a bird call (San 17). His association with mechanical time is unmistakeable: "From his trouser pocket Popeye took a dollar watch and put it back in his pocket loose like a coin (San 17). Popeye's face, even in the middle of the woods, has a "queer, bloodless colour as though seen by electric light" (San 15). Horace's observation that Popeye "smells black" is the final link between evil and the artificial.

Like Popeye, Temple Drake is a man-made creation, and an exponent of mechanical finite time. During the first night following the rape, her consciousness fixes on the hour of ten-thirty, the time of dressing for a dance, as the only point of order in a nothingness. The face of the clock with its arbitrary measurements and contrived significance becomes the only reality, the embodiment of her estrangement from natural time. She is deeply involved in the game of sexual exploitation and thus ten-thirty, mentioned four separate times, derives its importance from the mind that imposes it as a form of order on the chaos of experience. The clock is "a disc suspended in nothingness, the original chaos . . ." (San 113) or "a warped turmoil of faint light and shadow in geometric miniature" (San 114). Natural time, indicated by the changing saffron-coloured light on her ceiling, condenses ultimately into the clock face, for Temple is a creature of the artificial light of dance floors. The scene is a study in the contrast of objective and subjective time: outside, night approaches as the sunset proceeds, impinging to a very limited extent on the quality of the light in the room; inside, subjective time fixates on ten-thirty

with all of its psychological significance. The sounds that Temple is best able to distinguish are sounds of mechanical time: watches, bells, and the omnipresent clock. "She found that she was hearing her watch; had been hearing it for some time. . . . A bell rang faintly and shrilly somewhere. . . . She listened to the watch" (San 114). For two hours of what one might designate subjective time, Temple's watch continues to indicate ten-thirty. It is interesting to note that Horace also refers to the "gesture" of the clock face as qualitatively different from the real measure of time's significance. "It was as though there had not been any elapsed time between: the same gesture of the lighted clock-face" (San 160).

As Temple and Popeye and their violent mechanical world rush headlong by, nature in contrast has a static, timeless quality "as though Sunday were a quality of atmosphere, of light and shade . . ." (San 103). Nature includes the expectation of time future: it is "rife with a promise," while for Temple everything appears to be moving at great speed into the past. She "gazed dully forward as the road she had traversed yesterday began to flee backward under the wheels as onto a spool . . ." (San 103). The country and the town, the natural man and the artificial man, are continually juxtaposed in terms of time, the quiet inscrutable stasis of the former and the vicious exploitive pace of the latter. In fact, country people are said to function outside time, and they are described in Sanctuary as possessing the same kind of timelessness that Quentin observes in the Negroes.

> Slow as sheep they moved, tranquil, impassable,
> filling the passages, contemplating the fretful
> hurrying of those in urban shirts and collars . . .
> functioning outside of time, having left time

lying upon the slow and imponderable land. (San 86)[10]

Sanctuary is, to a large extent, the presentation of the moral imperfections of a world impelled by mechanical, finite time. Neither natural time which contrasts it, nor the intellectual efforts of one man to stop time through abstract and timeless principles, are shown to be successful in dealing with the violence which is suggested in Sartoris to be a "byproduct of the speed and the motion." The only possible respite from speed and motion seems to be a close association with the land, although the concept of natural time is not sufficiently developed in the novel to provide a powerful and sustained opposite pole.

While the treatment of time in Sanctuary seems contrived, imposed on characters who are more melodramatic than tragic, the novel is important to this study in several respects. First, the structure is roughly based on the alternation, accompanied by systematic shifts in time-vision, of the Horace-Narcissa and the Popeye-Goodwin-Temple strands until Goodwin's trial, where they are fused. In addition, Faulkner has made use of the flashback technique, particularly in the case of Horace, who is predisposed to experience life in retrospect. Evidently, the meaning of a story is not to be found in a sequential, one-dimensional arrangement of events whereby effects are, identifiably, caused. Rather, the structure of Sanctuary would suggest that time is "the fluid cradle of events";[11] the event, as will be demonstrated, absorbs past, present and future. As in the career of Thomas Sutpen, the moment of violent activity is "a very condensation of time which [is] the gauge of its own violence" (AA 249).

Secondly, it will prove significant in the discussions in chapters three and four that both the tendency to exploit the present

and live by the clock, as revealed in Popeye and Temple, and the compulsion to retreat from finite time into the past, as Horace does, result in social maladjustment. The ruthless destructiveness of Popeye and the inefficacy of Horace both derive from aberrant views of time.

FOOTNOTES--CHAPTER II

[1]Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Young Goodman Brown" (1835), in Selected Tales and Sketches, ed. Hyatt H. Waggoner (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1950).

[2]Ibid., p. 161.

[3]Faulkner, Sanctuary (New York: The New American Library, 1968), p. 97. Hereafter, this work is cited as San in parentheses within the body of the text.

[4]T.S. Eliot, Four Quartets, in Complete Poems 1926-1962, p. 199.

[5]See Narcissa's involvement with Byron Snopes in Sartoris (New York: The New American Library, 1964), p. 211. Hereafter, this work will be cited as Sar in parentheses within the body of the text.

[6]Richard P. Adams, Faulkner: Myth and Motion. The core of Adams' argument is to be found in Faulkner's assertion, expressed in a 1956 interview with Jean Stein vanden Heuvel, that "life is motion" and that "the aim of every artist is to arrest motion, which is life, by artificial means and hold it fixed so that a hundred years later, when a stranger looks at it, it moves again since it is life," Lion in the Garden, p. 253. Faulkner expresses the same idea in an interview at the University of Virginia in 1958. ". . . the only alternative to life is immobility, which is death," Frederick L. Gwynn and Joseph L. Blotner, eds., Faulkner in the University: Class Conferences at the University of Virginia, 1957-1958 (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1959), p. 271. See also Karl E. Zink's article, "Flux and the Frozen Moment: Imagery of Stasis in Faulkner's Prose," PMLA LXXI (June, 1956), pp. 285-301. Zink like Adams examines the powerful confrontation between the motion of life and the stasis of the timeless moment. Adams suggests that as the stream of time is undetectable to those moving along with it, the demonstration of the force of the current is possible only with the introduction of someone or something relatively static to resist and obstruct the flow. This idea is justly applied to the final section of The Mansion. Mink Snopes is used as a static point fixed in time (1908) by which to demonstrate and measure the passage of time. The post-World War II world he experiences thirty-eight years after his prison sentence began is wholly new and baffling to him.

[7]In Sartoris, too, Horace's lack of real contact with the present is constantly reiterated. Reference is made, for example, to his "air of fine and delicate futility" (Sar 139), his "wild fantastic futility" (Sar 152), and his "taut and delicate futility" (Sar 146), all of which describe, essentially, an incapacity to act in the present.

[8]See Quentin's constant references to roses and honeysuckle, which have, for him the same significance, in The Sound and the Fury.

[9]Sartre sees the Faulknerian character as looking at life in a rear-vision mirror. He can only see what is past, and thus the past "takes on a sort of super-reality." Sartre, p. 82.

[10]Similarly, Hightower, in Light in August, describes the rural population of which Lena is a representative as "good stock peopling in tranquil obedience to [destiny] the good earth; from these hearty loins without hurry or haste descending mother and daughter" (LA 384).

[11]Faulkner, Absalom, Absalom! (New York: The Modern Library, 1936), p. 66. Hereafter, this work will be cited as AA in parentheses within the body of the text.

CHAPTER III

The time contrasts which confront the reader in so stark and unequivocal a fashion in the characters of Sanctuary are encountered in a much more complex, subtle and pervasive form elsewhere in the Faulkner canon, particularly in those novels which, like The Sound and the Fury, represent experimental departures from omniscient and single point of view narration. What seems in Sanctuary deliberate disruption of time sequence becomes a direct participation on the part of the reader in the world experienced by the characters. The fact, for example, that Benjy's section of The Sound and the Fury is difficult to follow does not mean that his experiences would prove more coherent or meaningful to the reader if arranged on a chronological time line.

Time, as a psychological construct, constitutes one of the means by which the individual imposes some kind of order on his experience. For many of Faulkner's most memorable characters, subjective reality and time consciousness are very closely related--this chapter will attempt to assess their interaction in the characters, primarily, of The Sound and the Fury and Light in August, drawing occasionally on the experiences of striking characters from As I Lay Dying and The Hamlet and other novels.

In general, those characters of an intellectual predisposition are profoundly disturbed by the finite linear model of time; their attempts to transcend, reverse or stop it altogether are often made at a high level of conscious analysis. Darl of As I Lay Dying

expresses the desire for some kind of release from time: "How do our lives ravel out into the no-wind no-sound . . . if you could just ravel out into time. . . ."[1] Darl's longing to escape into another another dimension of time, unsullied by motion and change, is shared by Quentin Compson. He wants desperately to be able to "ravel out into time," but is too much preoccupied by the onward momentum of mechanical finite time to find this escape except in death.

The metaphysical core of The Sound and the Fury is to be found in the figure of Quentin Compson standing on a bridge, attempting to obliterate his impervious shadow, that dual symbol of passing time, and of his insubstantial, colourless existence. ". . . if I only had something to blot it into the water, holding it until it was drowned. . ." (SF 111). Quentin's mental and emotional tendencies are such that he cannot accept change, and consequently is totally unable to reconcile himself to a life within time, the agent of that change. Like Horace, he finds significant reality only in that which is immutable, in a world of eternal "forms" such as honour and virtue, which he rigidly defines in terms of their physical equivalent in this world--virginity. One is reminded of Socrates' allegory of the cave in which man's world is composed of shadows, sketchy, elusive, indistinct representations of a sunlit reality. Quentin exists in this twilight realm of the shadows ("death's other kingdom" as Eliot describes it in "The Hollow Men") which have replaced their conceptual counterparts: virginity, as Mr. Compson notes, is the shadow of virtue, fragile and unenduring as the

maidenhead which it presupposes; the morality demonstrated by Mrs. Compson is the shadow of sin; clock time is the shadow of meaningful time. ". . . only when the clock stops does time come to life" (SF 105).

Quentin's shadow world is delineated by words--like "honour" and "chastity"--which formalize his attempts to remove time and change from human experiences of the world. Addie Bundren notes the essential unreality of words in As I Lay Dying.[2] In fact, the whole novel might well be said to be an investigation of a single word, "death," on various levels of experience. From Anse's unfeeling knowledge of the fact of physical death, to Cash's precise and skillful physical tribute of the coffin, to Vardaman's hysterical transference: "My mother is a fish,"[3] the Bundrens assimilate 'death' in ways ranging in degree of abstraction from getting new teeth to an unravelling in time. Addie insists that words are only shadows of experience and, hence, are one stage removed from the reality of the present.[4] To have experienced something directly is to have dismissed the need for a word to describe it: a word is "just a shape to fill a lack" (AS 164). Mephistopheles in Goethe's Faust warns a student that "My friend, all theory is gray and the golden tree of life is green."[5] Faust says of words that "the name is sound and smoke beclouding the glow of heaven."[6] Quentin establishes the whole fabric of his life on this sound and smoke.

Words are after the fact of experience and as such are derivatives of what has passed, hence their essential unreality.

> They all talked at once, their voices insistent and contradictory and impatient, making of reality a possibility, then a probability, then an incontrovertible fact, as people will when their desires become words. (SF 145)

Caddy, to whom, as Watkins notes, the deed speaks far louder than the word, notes Quentin's predilection for words as essentially a category mistake: "Do you want me to say it do you think that if I say it it wont be" (SF 151). The powerful sensations and impulses of the present are Caddy's natural domain; she even offers herself to Quentin: "I'll do anything you want me to anything yes . . ." (SF 194). Every present sensation for Quentin, on the other hand, insofar as he is aware of his immediate surroundings at all, is an indication of some kind of loss, of time irrevocably passing.

Darl, too, experiences the flow of time in terms of words, and through words is brought to the position of doubting even his own existence. "And before you are emptied for sleep, what are you And when you are emptied for sleep, you are not. And when you are filled with sleep, you never were" (AS 76). His despair over the unending repetitiveness of time is more than a little reminiscent of Macbeth's "tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow" speech.

> How do our lives ravel into the no-sound, the weary gestures wearily recapitulant: echoes of old compulsions with no-hand on no-strings: in sunset we fall into furious attitudes, dead gestures of dolls. (AS 196-197)

Addie's condemnation of those who need words to avoid the demands of the present applies very precisely to Horace Benbow. His memento of the war, as we learn in Sartoris, is, significantly, a glass-blowing machine which he describes in a particularly effete literary figure as a "Midsummer Night's Dream to a salamander" (Sar 146).

Horace himself recognizes the bifurcation of words and experience, intellect and instinct, past and present: "But then acquired wisdom is a dry thing, it has a way of crumbling to dust where a sheer and blind coursing of stupid sap is impervious" (Sar 151). Obsession with words, then, is a symptom of the predisposition to arrest or even reverse time, a tendency not to come to terms with reality until it is past.[7]

When central aspects of his existence, such as Caddy's sexual innocence, change, Quentin must attempt to retreat from a present of loss into a past invulnerable to time. The exclusion of change from human affairs (and Quentin is obsessed with the idea of "temporary") necessitates a repudiation of finite time, which is irrevocably committed to change, to a consumption of the future. Quentin, trapped in finite time, wants to escape somehow into infinite time.[8] This desire for timelessness (for infinite time cannot by definition approach an end)[9] motivates Quentin's special affinity for twilight; like Andrea del Sarto, his life might well be said to be a "twilight-piece": ". . . I could see the twilight again, that quality of light as if time had really stopped for a while . . ." (SF 210). References in Quentin's section to the grey light of twilight are numerous, and frequently associated with death: ". . . outside the grey light the shadows of things like dead things in stagnant water . . . I wish you were dead . . ." (SF 195). This fading quality of twilight as it blots out the distinct outlines of the day is noted in "The Long Summer" section of The Hamlet as a quality which "effaces . . . from the day's tedious recording."[10]

As indicated in the introduction, the model of finite time is based on a past which is continually adding to itself, consuming an increasingly depleted future as death is approached. This, of course, means that the future shrinks away, ultimately, to nothing, eluding every human attempt to grasp it.

> Our revels now are ended. These our actors,
> As I foretold you, were all spirits and
> Are melted into air, into thin air
> And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
> The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
> The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
> Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve
> And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
> Leave not a rack behind.[11]

The Compson's world of "cloud-capp'd towers" has long since dissolved into a crumbling mansion and a degenerate, sterile set of actors. Mr. Compson insists that Quentin's world of ideals, even his despair at the vulnerability of ideals to time, is "founded securely on a fairy's wing,"[12] and that this world, too, will melt into thin air and leave not a rack behind.

The essence of Quentin's desire to be submerged in infinite time is the exclusion of effective motion and change from the realm of infinitude. If time is infinite, the future never diminishes, that is, man never moves any closer to a time which is infinitely removed from him. "Beneath the sag of the buggy the hooves neatly rapid like the motions of a lady doing embroidery, diminishing without progress like a figure on a treadmill being drawn rapidly offstage" (SF 154). The phenomenon of the buggy "diminishing without progress" is that which Sartre refers to as "motionless movement."[13] This treadmill effect, which occurs in striking fashion throughout Faulkner,

presents an appearance of suspension or relative motionlessness and timelessness which is seen as profoundly desirable by characters such as Quentin,[14] and which has all the paradoxical qualities of the oxymoron.[15]

Thus, in Absalom, Absalom!, Thomas Sutpen's descent from the mountains into civilization is described as a moment of the past suspended from finite time. They are "descending perpendicularly through temperature and climate . . . an attenuation from a kind of furious inertness and patient immobility . . . during which they did not seem to progress at all but just to hang suspended while the earth itself altered . . ." (AA 224-225). In "The Old People," Ike stands over the deer he has just shot "quick and slow," and becomes aware that movement has been captured "where it lay on the wet earth still in the attitude of speed and not looking at all dead" (GDM 164). This kind of image is repeated in "The Bear" where the hunters' wagon penetrates

> the tall and endless wall of dense November woods under the dissolving afternoon and the year's death, sombre, impenetrable . . . the surrey moving . . . until, dwarfed by that perspective into an almost ridiculous diminishment, the surrey itself seemed to have ceased to move . . . as as a solitary small boat hangs in lonely immobility, merely tossing up and down, in the infinite waste of the ocean while the water and then the apparently impenetrable land which it nears without appreciable progress, swings slowly. . . . (GDM 194-195)

Man in juxtaposition to the elemental forces of nature is often captured in the aspect of "frozen speed"; infinity of time and space is not to be approached. In "Old Man," for example, the flood, which demands physical endurance beyond the human from the escaped convict,

is described as "ordered and pageant-like and without motion."[16] For all the violent activity demanded of him, the convict senses that he has been snatched out of the stream of time into some furious extended moment of extra-temporality: ". . . both he and the wave were now hanging suspended simultaneous and unprogressing in pure time" (WP 128), pure time referring to infinite time in which the past never increases, the future never diminishes.[17]

In As I Lay Dying Faulkner uses the idea on at least three separate occasions, all interpreted by Darl. He sees the bizarre journey which the Bundrens undertake as possessing "a motion so soporific, so dreamlike as to be uninferant of progress, as though time and not space were decreasing between us and it" (AS 101). The buzzards which accompany the journey, hovering above Addie's coffin, are observed by Darl: "Motionless, the tall buzzards hang in soaring circles, the clouds giving them an illusion of retrograde" (AS 89).

The tranquillity of Lena Grove's journey to find Lucas Burch derives, too, from this active stasis. She is constantly moving toward Burch without seeming to get any closer to him.

> . . . behind her a long succession of peaceful and undeviating changes . . . through which she advance in identical and anonymous and deliberate wagons . . . like something moving forever and without progress across an urn. (LA 5-6)[18]

Similarly, Burch's ultimate escape from Lena is accomplished by means of a train which, in a world which is "too huge and fast for distance and time" (LA 418), produces an effect of "terrific nomotion" (LA 417).[19]

The gull in Quentin's section of The Sound and the Fury hovers out of time altogether, "motionless in midair, like on an invisible wire" (SF 110), and is for Quentin the only point of stasis in the midst of inexorable motion and change. It is a hovering speck of timelessness, poised as time, the train, and the world rush away. "I could hear my watch and the train dying away, as though it were running through another summer somewhere, rushing away under the poised gull and all things rushing" (SF 148). As the gull is suspended out of time, Gerald, directly underneath it, is "ceaselessly rowing himself right out of noon . . . into a drowsing infinity" and so partakes of "inertia itself" (SF 149), the condition of infinitude. The hypnotic stasis of the scene makes a profound impression on Quentin, who is engaged in frantic attempts to choke the onward momentum of time, or to retreat from evidences of it.

In order to escape, then, from the destructiveness of finite time into the timeless, Quentin, like Horace, constructs an intellectual system composed of Platonic ideals, eternal and immutable principles designed not only to afford protection against change, but to deny and even to reverse the changes that have compromised the Golden Age of the past into the Iron Age of the present. Quentin's description of the bakery could justifiably be applied to the state of his own mind: "dusty shelves of ordered certitudes long divorced from reality" (SF 155). His intellectual system, a kind of literary idealization of the Old South, attempts to defy, through the word 'honour,' the reality of growth and development in Caddy. Ironically, blinded by his obsession with change, he fails entirely to see that

which never changes, Caddy's love for him. Benjy, despite his cognitive limitations, never doubts Caddy's capacity for love; it accounts for the way in which he experiences his world.

Quentin tries to effect a reversal of Caddy's loss of innocence, to recreate the little sister of the past, in his protective treatment of the little Italian girl. The afternoon he spends with her is a retreat to a quasi-rural natural setting in which water, "swift and peaceful," figures prominently. In this attempt to live once more in the edenic past of innocent childhood, Quentin seems to possess a sense of water's presence even lacking empirical evidence: "the sense of water mute and unseen," or "I began to feel the water before I came to the bridge" (SF 143). The apparent reversal of chronological time represented by this afternoon, is offset by an atmosphere charged with failure, the water by which Quentin commits suicide representing the inevitable failure of rational control over time. The Jay Gatsby who insists "Can't repeat the past? Of course you can!"[20] ends up lying face down in water.

Intermittent during this tranquil afternoon are fragmented replays in Quentin's mind of scenes involving sexual change, such as he and Natalie wrestling in the hog-wallow; sexual changes eventually collaborate to destroy his world. Quentin regards sex with a fascinated repugnance deriving from its inescapable associations with loss, and hence with finite time. Thus, the final irony of this innocent excursion into the past is that it is interpreted sexually by the girl's brother and by the law. Quentin, upholder of honour and chastity, who is willing to fight for this principle against

Gerald Bland who imputes it, is accused of kidnapping the girl by a proponent of the same principles he defends: "I keela heem', Julio said. . . . 'You steala my seester'" (SF 173).[21] Finite time not only acts in defiance of Quentin's intellectual system, it uses his own system against him.

The attempt to construct reality mentally makes Quentin an idealist, yet his is an imperfect idealism: his intellectual system is not reality-proof. Evidences of linear time continually seep into his world and torture him with reminders that the clock measures a kind of time which is finite and irreversible. "And all our yesterdays have lighted fools / The way to dusty death."[22] Time is the deadly enemy of the idealist,[23] and in seeking to avoid all symbols of its progress, Quentin merely succeeds in developing an obsessive awareness of its presence: bells, watches, clocks, shadows, surround and haunt him. If he turns his watch face down or turns his back on the shadow of the sash, he can sense "the parade of time" which he cannot see; even if he tears the hands off his watch, the mechanism, the process of time continues. The noise of the trolley can periodically blot out the sound of his watch, but a kind of body clock merely takes over: ". . . Eating the business of eating inside of you space too space and time confused Stomach saying noon brain saying eat oclock All right I wonder what time it is what of it. . ." (SF 129). No matter how devious and ingenious Quentin's efforts to vanquish time are, he "never could come out even with the bell"[24] (SF 109). In asking whether any of the clocks in the jewellery shop window tell the right time, Quentin is really suggesting that asking

the time is a begged question; he is asking whether man's time is Time. Evidently, the answer is no. The clocks all measure a different hour; only the ticking or the process is common to all of them. Man's time, thus, is a chaos of contradictory signals.[25]

Mr. Compson insists upon a distinction between this finite measured time and universal or cosmic time. He advises that "only when the clock stops does time come to life" (SF 105); he realizes that the compulsions exerted on man by finite time are irresistible. "Because no battle is ever won he said" (SF 93). Nothing is permanent in the realm of finite time. This lack of permanence forms the basis of Mr. Compson's philosophical nihilism. Even Christ was not crucified, he was "worn away by the minute clicking of little wheels" (SF 94). If everything must end, "nothing is even worth the changing of it" (SF 96). The essence of Mr. Compson's argument is to be found in Schopenhauer's taut definition of time: "Time is that by virtue of which everything becomes nothingness in our hands and loses all real value."[26] Thus, the watch becomes the "mausoleum of all hope and desire" (SF 93), and bells, even wedding bells, come to possess the quality of impending death. Everything has a built-in 'was': "was the saddest word of all there is nothing else in the world its not despair until time its not even time until it was" (SF 222).

Any philosophy which regards attempts to trascend time as futile reinforcements of man's "folly and despair" and which, thus, regards absolutes as illusions is relativistic. Mr. Compson thus finds no timeless meaning inherent in human actions. Significance

is defined, rather, by the temporary, subjective conditions of the present: ". . . every man is the arbiter is of more importance than the act itself. . ." (SF 219).

This kind of relativism is, of course, wholly unacceptable to Quentin. His attraction to the idea of incest is purely intellectual: he want to establish an absolute of sin, an act which is inherently and timelessly sinful, and which corresponds to and verifies the existence of an absolute of virtue "symmetrical above the flesh."[27] He seeks to prove one timeless truth by means of another, tormented at the same time by glimpses of universal erosion by time. Eliot's "East Coker" begins "In my beginning is my end," and this pre-determined finitude becomes a focal point in Quentin's psychological processes. To justify his cheating at college, Herbert insists to Quentin that "a young fellow like you would consider a thing of that sort a lot more serious than you will in five years" (SF 134). Honesty, according to Herbert, is not an abstract code but a temporary mode of behavior. As an adjunct to the human condition, it is subject to change. Quentin's fear of the temporary is pathological; even a bodily need such as hunger can be corroded by time: "I'd stay hungry until about one, then all of a sudden I'd even forget I wasn't hungry anymore" (SF 134). Caddy's loss of virginity can only be assimilated by Quentin's idealism as the result of violation or force: "did he make you then he made you do it let him he was stronger than you and he tomorrow I'll kill him I swear I will. . ." (SF 187). A rape is a direct physical contravention of the honour code that can be challenged and revenged, "exorcised with truth,"

thus reinforcing the validity of the code. Caddy's love and desire for Dalton Ames are, for Quentin, unredeemable in terms of time and imbue him with a profound sense of loss.

Quentin's most immediate incentive for suicide is his despair that even despair will be depleted by time. He "cannot bear to think that someday it will no longer hurt . . . like this now. . ." (SF 220). He comes to suspect, like Don Quixote, another famous idealist, that "there is no memory which time does not efface, nor any pain that death does not destroy."[28] In view of the fact that his attempts to reverse the onward flow of chronological time have failed, Quentin wants to freeze time at the point of maximum despair, before this "sorrow . . . purchased without design and which matures willynilly . . . is recalled by whatever issue the gods happen to be floating at the time. . ."[29] (SF 221). Quentin's death is so inevitable that his section represents the expression of a man already dead: "I died last year. . ."[30] (SF 153).

Water, in Quentin's section, is timeless and has, as in the "Death by Water" section of Eliot's "The Wasteland," a dual significance: destruction, and salvation from time. Like Phlebas, Quentin will enter, by means of water, the "whirlpool" of infinite time. In Quentin's terms, however, infinite time is not cyclical but linear, leading to the possibility of a day of judgment on which the flatirons will come floating up. Quentin's fascination with the old trout is significant in the light of his attraction to death by water. The trout is motionless in a stream of perpetual onrush; it is suspended from the currents of time in perfect repose. "The trout hung, delicate

motionless among the wavering shadows" (SF 145). It is eternal--it cannot be caught by man. Water provides the trout with a sanctuary from finite time, and Quentin finds this prospect to be very attractive indeed. Interesting, too, is the fact that the trout appears to Quentin as a shadow, "hanging like a fat arrow" under the water. Quentin continually attempts to trample and obliterate his shadow, but it remains on the surface of the water and refuses to drown.

The trout, like Old Ben, embodies a transcendence of finite time in life (Quentin can achieve this only in death) which characterizes nature to a very large degree in Faulkner, and provides a basis for contrasting man's mechanical time and natural time. The time contrast between the Harvard campus and surrounding countryside which Quentin visits on his last afternoon is striking. Harvard is permeated with bells, watches, clocks, chimes and whistles, as well as school "terms," which manipulate life into a predictable, frantic pattern, while the rural afternoon is idyllic in its static tranquillity, a "drowsing infinity" (SF 149) which presents to Quentin a picture of captured innocence. Sounds do not vanish into thin air here; they "sink into silence" (SF 153). Intruding into this natural time, there is the "round stupid assertion" (SF 154) of a clock, but it is "far enough" (SF 149) away. In terms of this juxtaposition of natural and mechanical time, it is significant that Benjy's pasture has been sold and converted into a golf course to provide the funds to sen Quentin to Harvard. Nature has been despoiled in order to install Quentin in an environment where clocks reign supreme.[31]

The existence of the Compson children prior to the intrusion of chronological time and its losses is remembered by them in terms closely allied to nature. "Caddy smelled like trees" (SF 5). "Versh smelled like rain. He smelled like a dog, too" (SF 84). Benjy bellows his protests at the first sign of Caddy's departure from natural innocence towards sexual maturity, her use of perfume. She no longer smells like trees, and he is not satisfied until she has washed off this intrusion upon her natural state.

The contrast between man-made and natural time is to be found also in the juxtaposition of Negro and White. Throughout the novel, the Negroes as a group seem to embody a kind of timelessness which indicates their essential harmony with nature.[32] Quentin is aware of "that quality about them of shabby and timeless patience, of static serenity" (SF 107), and it is this quality which leads Faulkner to say of Dilsey, "They endured." The convicts in "Old Man" evoke this same sense of natural time: ". . . like dogs at a field trial they stood, immobile, patient, almost ruminant, their back turned to the rain as sheep and cattle do" (WP 62).

This natural time is embodied in the figure of Dilsey, who provides an unchanging emotional centre to the Compson family, raising her own family as well, and protecting everyone as best she can from Jason. She cannot be defeated by finite time because she does not consciously battle it, and this enduring submission makes possible a transcendence over its vicissitudes.[33] There is a core of her that remains impervious to and untouched by time: ". . . only the indomitable skeleton was left rising like a ruin or a landmark above the

somnolent and impervious guts. . ." (SF 331). She has an ability to correlate her time with clock time (she adds three hours), but the two are independent, and the clock cannot rule her.[34] Dilsey seems to incorporate all of time: "I've seed de first en de last. . ."[35] (SF 371). Unlike the bells in Quentin's section which indicate the irrevocable passing of finite time, the bells in Dilsey's section celebrate the transcendence of human mortality and finite time--it is Easter Sunday.[36]

If Dilsey is like Mr. Compson in her submission to change as a fact of reality, she provides a sharp contrast to him, first in the fact that she does not interpret change nihilistically, and secondly in her embodiment of what Faulkner would call the "eternal verities":[37] courage, honesty, generosity, compassion, fortitude. Unlike Quentin, she does not mentally construct a world around her to fit these ideals, nor does she insist on their presence in other people; she simply exhibits them unconsciously in all her encounters with others. Her ideals are life-giving; those of Quentin deal in death.

As was mentioned in connection with Sanctuary, Faulkner's most vicious characters are those who are most artificial, most imbued with the compulsions of mechanical time, and Jason is certainly the most memorable and dehumanized in his corruption. He is the only one of the Compsons who effectively exists in the present, but it is at the expense of any human considerations. That his life is arranged in terms of finite linear time is undeniable: he is exploiting the past (the fact of Caddy's pregnancy) for the purpose of consuming the

future (he plans to extort indefinitely the money that Caddy sends to her daughter). If Jason continually asks what time it is, he is not concerned about time as the reducto ad absurdum of human experience, he is concerned with making a profit on schedule. It is ironic that despite (or perhaps because of) his obsession with the clock, he is invariably too late to act effectively--none of his actions ever produces a profitable result.

The frenetic pace which Jason maintains throughout the section is associated with his brutal treatment of the old man with the travelling show. If Jason is an alien to God's law in his pursuit of Quentin on Easter Sunday morning, he is so degenerate as to be an alien to man's law as well: the sheriff refuses to render him any legal assistance in recovering the money. Like Popeye, Jason's alienation from nature is irrevocable; his excursion into nature in pursuit of an ever-receding past (Quentin and the money) brings him nothing but "beggar lice and twigs and stuff" (SF 300). His disgust with nature is almost amusing: ". . . and then I happened to look around and I had my hand right on a bunch of poison oak. The only thing I couldn't understand was why it was just poison oak and not a snake or something" (SF 300). In Jason, we see the end of the Compson family, corroded by clock time with its associated compulsions, and the substitution of material possession for affiliation with nature.[38] The whole Compson clan is on a finite linear course towards destruction. "The clock ticked, solemn and profound. It might have been the dry pulse of the decaying house itself; after a while it whirred and cleared its throat and struck six times "

(SF 355).

If the movement of time from future into past means the possibility of gain to the shrewd and grasping Jason, the changes produced by time passing, to Benjy's limited capacities of awareness, provoke an indefinable but pervasive sense of loss. "It was nothing. Just sound. It might have been all time and injustice and sorrow become vocal for an instant by a conjunction of planets" (SF 359). In the sense that Benjy can not protect himself intellectually from the consequences of finite time, he is the most vulnerable to time of the Compsons; he can only howl his dismay at changes (and his intuitive sensitivity to such changes is very keen). And yet he is able, as Quentin is not, to live in the past--his mind, incapable of fine conceptual distinctions, ranges relatively freely between present and past. Catching his clothes on the fence leads him to replay, to re-experience in effect, those sensations recorded at a similar event in the past, when he was with Caddy.[39] Significant events for Benjy always involve Caddy. This simple absorption of sensation without any kind of intellectual order produces a fluidity of past and present, but since Benjy is capable of experiencing the sensation of loss (and loss implies time past), he must intuitively realize that, as Russell notes in his objection to Bergson's conception, the memory of the event is not precisely the same thing as the event itself.[40]

If Quentin's predominant symbol is the shadow, the grey form of time passing, Benjy's section is full of mirrors, in which the colours and the immediacy of the present are recorded.[41] He

is able to experience again and again Caddy's love without abstraction or rationalization, or the need (indeed the capacity) to project his will on the people who surround him, to regard, as Hightower says of himself, other people as mirrors of his own personality.

It is interesting to compare Benjy's world of fluid time in which every present sensation evokes a wealth of past sensations to the relationship between Ike Snopes and time, in The Hamlet. Ike exists in a perpetual present measured by no intellectual apparatus. With a great number of repetitions, his body can be taught to perform certain tasks over an extended period of time, but many references are made to his unceasing astonishment at the present moment. The past does not extend itself into the present by means of memory: ". . . yesterday was not, tomorrow is not, today is merely a placid and virginal astonishment at the creeping ridge of dust and trash in front of the broom" (H 168). To reconstruct the past requires "an effort almost physical, like childbirth" (H 180) from Ike. Yet the idiot is not without a sense of time; in some of the most lyrical passages in Faulkner Ike's immersion in the natural time of day and night, and the seasons, is described. In a sense, he exists in pure time, as far removed as it is possible to be from the spatialized time of mechanical measurement. Space, of course, involves a judgment of relationships of which Ike is totally incapable. ". . . there is no distance in either space or geography, no prolongation of time for distance to exist in, no muscular fatigue to establish its accomplishment. They are moving not towards a destination in space but a destination in time. . ." (H 181). The only record of time in the

description of Ike's love affair with Houston's cow consists in natural changes in the day, with associated alterations in the quality of light, from the rarified upward dissemination of dawn, to the "silent copper roar" of sunrise (H 184), to the "crown of light garlanding all" of noon (H 186), to the "golden air" (H 188) of approaching sunset. Their destination is sunset and "they pursue it as the sun itself does. . ." (H 186). As in The Sound and the Fury, water is evocative of the timeless. The spring from which Ike drinks is "the well of days, the still and insatiable aperture of earth" (H 188). It incorporates all of time: "It holds in tranquil paradox of suspended precipitation dawn, noon, and sunset; yesterday, today, and tomorrow. . ." (H 188). The whole passage is a memorable description of the operation of natural time with its sense of becoming and promise rather than loss.

The infinitely expansive bounty of natural time and the narrow onrush of clock time are nowhere placed in such dramatic juxtaposition of character as in that most improbable of couples, Eula Varner and Flem Snopes. Chronological time simply has no application to Eula, who dislocates and transcends it: she has at once "a face eight years old and a body of fourteen with a female shape of twenty. . ." (H 114). According to her awe-struck schoolteacher, Eula "reached and passed puberty in the foetus" (H 114). Like Lena Grove, Eula embodies the life-giving principle of timeless nature; she is imbued with a "quality of static waiting through and beneath the accumulating days of burgeoning and unhurryable time. . ." (H 175). As the "supreme primal uterus," the earth mother,

she exudes a natural fecundity which is beyond all boundaries of finite time and space.

Just as Quentin is tormented by Caddy's generous sensuality, Eula's brother is outraged by Eula's physical overabundance: "too much of leg, too much of breast, too much of buttock; too much of mammalian meat. . ." (H 100). But Jody can hardly accuse her of participating in, much less exploiting, her femaleness; she represents an almost total divorce of the physical and the mental. Mr. Compson's comment to Quentin that virginity is a negative state not to be found in nature precisely describes Eula. Like the gull or the trout in The Sound and the Fury, Eula is motionlessness at the centre of motion, the point of stasis "inattentive and serene," surrounded by a chaotic jumble to which it has reduced all formal patterns and to which it is invulnerable. "It would have but one point, like a swarm of bees, and she would be that point, that centre, swarmed over and importuned yet serene and intact . . . the queen, the matrix. . ." (H 116). As Eliot notes in "Burnt Norton," "Except for the point, the still point, / There would be no dance. . . ."[42] The eternality associated with Eula is that of the progenitive principle by which nature extends itself into the future. She is ruled by no man-made pattern or measurement, and is as invulnerable to all human possession as the nature presented to us in Absalom, Absalom! or Go Down, Moses. It is this eternal imperviousness to human conquest which leads Labove to describe her as a field: "rich and fecund and foul and eternal and impervious to him who claimed title to it, oblivious. . ." (H 119). Eula is an expression of the transcendent

character of natural time. She obliterates artificial distinctions between past, present and future in incorporating all knowledge and all experience. After Eula leaves the school, Labove is once again in clock time.

Eula as a natural force has a conceptual opposite, also a force rather than a complex personality, in the figure of Flem Snopes, the "frog-like creature" who appears out of nothing in a ditch one day, and progressively and imperceptibly absorbs the business interests of Frenchman's Bend. He represents the acquisitive impetus of mechanical time. As a force, however, he has no beginning and so, in a sense, is out of time; his powers of acquisition have, apparently, no end. He has become the president of the Jefferson bank by the time of The Mansion and so has replaced the traditional aristocracy represented by Major deSpain.

The weapon that Flem (like Jason) uses to establish a dominance which extends almost dynastically to the entire Snopes clan, is the past, a mysterious unsubstantiated barn-burning which Flem neither confirms nor denies, but the mere rumour of which facilitates Flem's upward mobility. Out of the confusion of Varner ownerships in Frenchman's Bend, one fact clearly emerges: Flem and his relatives are continually increasing their possessions and their power, and this ascendancy is retained through an astute exploitation of the present (and the moral shortcomings of their neighbours). The Snopeses know when to act to their advantage, and their actions are as self-perpetuating as the plague. Jody Varner despairs of them in The Hamlet: "I want to make one pure and simple demand of you and

I want a pure and simple Yes or No for an answer: How many more is there? How much longer is this going on? Just what is it going to cost me to protect one goddam barn full of hay?" (H 68). Gavin Stevens defines Snopesism as operating within two categories of time. On one hand, the Snopeses possess the ability to wrest success from finite time as it passes, by means of money (T 263), and on the other hand, they represent a timeless "profound and incontrovertible hermaphroditic principle for the furtherance of a race, a species. . ." (T 136).

At its centre, Light in August has something of the same polarity as Eula and Flem bring to The Hamlet, although in considerably more complex and psychologically interesting form. The association of Eula and natural time is to be found in the figure of Lena Grove, tranquil and serene, embodiment of the life-giving, fructifying principle of nature. Hightower recognizes Lena's affiliation with natural time in an essentially cyclical vision of human regeneration which is paralleled in the large symmetry of the novel beginning and ending with Lena's journey. With Lean's baby, some promise of rebirth, of restored fertility on the sterile Bundren plantation, has been fulfilled.

> It seems to him that he can see, feel about him the ghosts of rich fields, and of the rich fecund black life of the quarters, the mellow shouts, the presence of fecund women, the prolific naked children in the dust before the doors; and the big house again, noisy, loud with the treble shouts of the generations. (LA 385)[43]

Although the novel begins and ends with Lena involved in a journey, she exhibits no haste, but rather is assimilated into the

time of nature, as she travels "with the untroubled unhaste of a change of season" (LA 47).[44] The wagon on which Lena rides is described as moving essentially outside time. "The wagon moves slowly, steadily, as if here within the sunny loneliness of the enormous land it were outside of, beyond all time and all haste" (LA 24). In terms of space, the wagon operates "in some inescapable middle distance, at once static and fluid" (LA 24-25); the spatial relationships which are confirmed and measured by chronological time are strangely absent because Lena's journey is incorporated into the steady rhythm of natural time. Just as Eula is described as having the irresistible appeal of nature itself, "immediate and profound and without calculation,"[45] Lena "sits quite still, hearing and feeling the implacable and immemorial earth" (LA 26). Hightower senses the unreasoning ageless quality which is so foreign to chronological measurement when he contrasts Lena and Byron:

> 'You [Lena] are probably not much more than half his age. But you have already outlived him twice over. He will never overtake you, catch up with you, because he has wasted too much time. And that too, his nothing is as irremediable as your all.' (LA 389)

The other pole of the novel is the "terrible haste" (LA 146) of Joe Christmas. Unlike Lena, who looks perpetually forward with the unquestioning promise of future fulfillment, the violent and destructive movement of Joe is essentially backward-looking. He is tortured by doubts about his past, but the more he tries to escape it, the more implacably does it dominate his responses in the present and seal his doom.[46] Although his failure to transcend the past ("All I wanted was peace," LA 104) suggests that Joe is motion-

less in time, this motionlessness is produced, paradoxically, by frenetic activity. "Doomed with motion," he is an inhabitant of the realm of clock time with its perpetual and measured movement into the time lost of the past. His life is continually described as a street, thirty years long, "savage and lonely"--the perfect image of Faulkner's conception of linear finite time. He is always aware of the clock; as he looks up at the stars, he waits for the strokes of the courthouse clock, knowing exactly what time it is.[47]

> It must be near ten now, he though; and then almost with the thought he heard the clock on the courthouse two miles away. Slow measured clear the ten strokes came. He counted them, stopped again in the lonely and empty road. 'Ten o'clock', he thought 'I heard ten strike last night too. And eleven. And twelve.' (LA 110)

Joe's escape from tyrannical McEachern is described in the images of "frozen speed" which suggest that Joe never does in any significant way escape from McEachern or, indeed, any part of his past: "spent and terrific slowness" (LA 196), "Juggernautish simulation of terrific speed" (LA 190), "in the attitude of terrific speed" (LA 197). Even if his flight seems to partake of timelessness, Joe is immediately aware of the clock as he enters the town: "A clock was striking one somewhere. . ." (LA 196).

For Joe, as for Quentin, the future is already past; like Quentin he is frequently described as a shadow--his only reality is of time past. Even as he prepares to kill Joanna Burden, he waits for the clock to strike, knowing that he has, in a sense already killed her.

> And as he sat in the shadows of the ruined garden on that August night three months later and heard the clock in

> the courthouse two miles away strike ten and then eleven, he believed with calm paradox that he was the volitionless servant of the fatality in which he believed that he did not believe. He was saying to himself I had to do it already in the past tense; I had to do it. She said so herself. . . (LA 264)

The future is a part of the same "flat pattern" of the past. "And going on: tomorrow night, all the tomorrows, to be a part of the flat pattern, going on. He thought of that with quiet astonishment: going on, myriad, familiar, since all that had ever been was the same, as all that was to be, since tomorrow to-be and had-been would be the same" (LA 266).

The character of time for Joe radically changes during his final flight. As an inevitable death approaches, not only does mechanical time cease to have meaning, even light and dark become random and chaotic, with no extension.

> Time, the spaces of light and dark, had long since lost orderliness. It would be either one now, seemingly at an instant, between two movements of the eyelids, without warning. . . . Sometimes it would seem to him that a night of sleep . . . would be followed immediately by another night without interval of day. . . . (LA 316)

It is interesting that the habit of measuring time is so deeply ingrained in Joe that "the day of the week seemed more important than food" (LA 314). Time has become telescoped for Joe; he never knows whether he will wake up in light or in darkness, but he is unable to organize his actions toward some kind of goal without knowing the day of the week. "He found that he was trying to calculate the day of the week. It was as though now and at last he had an actual and urgent need to strike off the accomplished days toward some purpose. . ." (LA 317).

Joe senses that in some way he has left the orderly if trivial world of mechanical time, and entered a condition approaching timelessness. "When he thinks about time, it seems to him now that for thirty years he has lived inside an orderly parade of named and numbered days like fence pickets, and that one night he went to sleep and when he waked up he was outside of them" (LA 314). This sense of having transcended measured time is accompanied by an almost peaceful affiliation with nature. "He breathes deep and slow, feeling with each breath himself diffuse in the neutral grayness, becoming one with loneliness and quiet that has never known fury or despair" (LA 313).

Joe's death is described as a further extension of this translation from finite to infinite time; in death Joe achieves the timelessness so desperately desired by Quentin: ". . . upon that black blast the man seemed to rise roaring into their memories forever and ever. . ." (LA 440). The man whose haste is violent and uncompromising achieves a kind of peace as he is killed: "For a long moment he looked up at them with peaceful and unfathomable and unbearable eyes" (LA 439).

The polarity of the creative and the destructive found in Lena and Joe is complicated by the fact that, like Eula, Lena functions as the still point of the turning wheel of the novel: around her move the figures of Byron and Hightower. When Lena first meets Byron Bunch, he is the embodiment of habit and ritual, which are, essentially, a way of regarding time. His solitary lunches, for example, consume exactly one hour, no more: "Byron ate his lunch,

the silver watch open beside him. When it said one o'clock, he went back to work" (LA 45). The time pattern to which he is committed gives him, in a sense, immunity from the disruptive immediacy of experience, of time present. That the formal pattern is fundamentally irrelevant to the more powerful forces of natural time is shown by Lena's reaction: "A few minutes wouldn't make no difference, would it?" (LA 47).

In one way, Light in August is a record of the movement of Bunch into the sphere of natural time, of direct participation in unsystematized, unintellectualized experience. This transition from time as schedule to time as immersion is made reluctantly at first; Byron's whole life to date has been a regular and systematic reduction of future into past. "All day I have been thinking how easy it would be if I could just turn back to yesterday and not have any more to worry about than I had then" (LA 76). Like Joe, Byron finds himself somehow outside the picket fence of measured time, and is both confused and disconcerted by his attraction to Lena. The train on which Brown flees assumes a unique role in Byron's transition from the ritual of measured time to the world of natural time embodied in Lena. Byron has always been intellectually aware of Lena's pregnancy, but Brown's hasty departure (and hence the train on which he leaves) is, in a sense, the last slender barrier between him and a real physical and emotional confrontation with her lack of virginity. In one way, the train is "the world and time too" (LA 416) which Byron has temporarily left after his fight. The fact that the train is moving re-establishes the whole concept of distance and space. Yet as it approaches, it presents

"an effect of terrific nomotion" (LA 417), and the man whom Byron sees jump onto the train "materialize[s] apparently out of the air, in the act of running" (LA 417). When Brown appears on the train, it becomes "a dyke beyond which the world, time, hope unbelievable and certainty incontrovertible waited, giving him yet a little more of peace" (LA 418), delaying somewhat the rush of the world and the need to act in the present. Unlike Quentin, whose very existence is threatened by the finitude measured out by clock time, Byron sees the clock as the source of order through repetition, a protection from that burgeoning promise of future he finds so threatening in natural time.

At the beginning of the novel, Hightower, too, exists far from the exigencies of the present. Time has stopped for him at a moment of frozen speed in the past: ". . . the only day he seemed to have ever lived in--that day when his grandfather was shot from the galloping horse. . ." (LA 57). His grandfather's inheritance, essentially, is death and he invests this inheritance in a clerical vocation because the seminary seems to him comfortingly remote from time and change.

> But they could not tell whether he himself believed or not what he told them, if he cared or not, with his religion and his grandfather being shot from the galloping horse all mixed up, as though the seed which his grandfather had transmitted to him had been killed too and time had stopped there and then for the the seed and nothing had happened in time since, not even him. (LA 59)

It is interesting that Hightower must operate physically according to a very strict and unceasing application of clock time, while

psychologically, he stops time at single moment of the past. Even as a child, his "organs already required the unflagging care of a Swiss watch. . ." (LA 444).

If Joe Christmas is a shadow,[48] Hightower is a ghost, living among the phantoms of the past. "That son grew to manhood among phantoms, and side by side with a ghost" (LA 449). Not only does the future not exist for him, he is, like Quentin and Joe, the ultimate denial of natural time, the man already dead. "It's no wonder that I had no father and that I had already died one night twenty years before I saw light" (LA 452). He compares his life to a "classic and serene vase," a "sanctuary" from time, and yet he, too, is drawn into the gravitational field of the present embodied in Lena. Hightower's reluctant involvement with the present, which marks the end of his self-imposed solitary confinement, seems irresistibly to force him to a re-interpretation and re-evaluation of the past. In his bargain with time,[49] he discovers that he has omitted the crucial factor of his own moral responsibility. As he re-enters the world of time and change, then, the impetus to act in the present (provided by Byron and Lena)[50] also demands some kind of account of the past. He is faced with the recognition that the timelessness of his world, based on that perpetual moment of his grandfather's death, is an artificial construct designed as such to protect him from responsibility for the more recent past as from social responsibility for the present. The wheel of time, a constant image in Hightower's thought, begins to turn, impelled by the exigencies of nature. Although the wheel moves at first in sand, hence slowly,

due to Hightower's overwhelming reluctance to allow time to penetrate his solitary world, it gathers momentum, at last forcing him into a confrontation with past and present.

> He is aware of the sand now; with the realization of it he feels within himself a gathering as though for some tremendous effort. Progress now is still progress, yet it is now indistinguishable from the recent past like the already traversed inches of sand which cling to the turning wheel, raining back with a dry hiss. . . . (LA 464)

The wheel becomes a "medieval torture instrument" (LA 465) as it slowly and implacably grinds him to the realization that his telescoping of all his consciousness into a single moment of the past, a moment of death moreover, has had fatal repercussions for a person outside himself. He has not only consigned himself to death in stopping time, he has in effect killed his wife.

> And I know that for fifty years I have not even been clay: I have been a single instant of darkness in which a horse galloped and a gun crashed. And if I am my dead grandfather on the instant of his death, then my wife, his grandson's wife . . . the debaucher and murderer of my grandson's wife, since I could neither let my grandson live or die . . . (LA 465)

The intersection of the past and the future is the present, life, but for Hightower, who has been inert too long to adapt to movement in time, it is also death. "Already he can feel the two instants about to touch: the one which is the sum of his life, which renews itself between each dark and dusk, and the suspended instant out of which the soon will presently begin" (LA 460). Hightower's gradually approaching death is presented in terms of the "fading copper light" of afternoon, a light which is audible as "a dying yellow fall of trumpets dying into an interval of silence. . ."

(LA 441). The senses almost imperceptibly merge, as light expires into a kind of timeless suspension: a "green suspension in color and texture like light through coloured glass" (LA 443). This is the August light of the title, "the lambent suspension of August into which night is about to fully come" (LA 465).

Battles against finite time and its accompanying change, we have seen, are conducted in various ways and with varying degrees of success in Faulkner's characters. Quentin directs his campaign against finite time with the most ferocity and abandon, his destruction of chronometers and his system of first positive and then negative ideals leading inevitably to his embracing "little sister death" as the surest means of transcending finitude. Horace Benbow, too, is deeply concerned with achieving some kind of timelessness in human affairs, and this he tries to do with an elaborate system of abstraction, such that the particular is only the ephemeral distortion of some unchanging, eternal universal. He and Gavin Stevens are irresistibly drawn to words, and, as words are the monuments of the past, they experience reality at some distance from the present. Hightower, like Rosa Coldfield, exists in terms of time artificially stopped (through considerable expenditures of psychological energy) at a particular moment. This point of stasis is invested with all the significance of a lifetime just as, for the young Thomas Sutpen, one moment of rejection in the past becomes the focal point for the great design which is to conquer personal finitude. This moment of stopped time is not only past: Mink Snopes exists patiently decade after decade in jail in terms of that single moment, not of the past

but of the future, when he will kill his kinsman Flem. Jason attempts to defeat mechanical time by a frenetic pace which should facilitate the extraction of maximum profit from each present moment. The same thing is true, to a large extent, of Flem, who is, however, considerably more successful in his opportunism. Joe Christmas violently disavows the continuous nature of time by repudiating any heritage, black or white. He conducts a tortured campaign against the past, a campaign which sees him forever moving, and which makes of his life a single street which changes geographically in an arbitrary fashion. Even Benjy resists, as best he can, any sensations of time-produced loss by maintaining a strict order and ritual in his universe, which can only be disrupted to the accompaniment of his prolonged howling.

Those characters who stand in contrast to the battlers against time are, for the most part, associated with natural time. They are immersed in time, and because they refuse to struggle against the current, achieve a relative motionlessness, a transcendence of finite time. Dilsey intuitively creates a kind of harmony out of the sound and the fury of the Compson decline; she endures. Eula and Lena have that stasis which derives from a perfect adaptation to their temporal environment. They embody cyclical time in that they hold the promise of rebirth and regeneration, and reaffirm the timeless fecundity of nature.

> I give it to you not that you may remember time, but that you might forget it now and then for a moment and not spend all your breath trying to conquer it. Because no battle is ever won he said. They are not even fought. The field only reveals to man his own folly and despair and victory is an illusion of philosophers and fools. (SF 93)

FOOTNOTES--CHAPTER III

[1]Faulkner, As I Lay Dying (New York: Vintage Books, 1930), p. 198. Hereafter cited as AS in parentheses within the body of the text.

[2]See Floyd C. Watkins, The Flesh and the Word (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1971), which examines the dichotomy between intellectual and sensual, mind and body. Watkins finds that the characters in Faulkner most associated with the "word" are the most disturbed and alienated.

[3]Of the Bundrens, it is Darl who best represents the tendency to react to words as significant in themselves.

[4]In Mosquitoes, too, the opposition between action and words is explored in terms of the present and the past. The young people are immersed, we are repeatedly told, in the actual experience of life, while the older people talk about their respective pasts, in a futile attempt to compensate for the passage of time. The only genuine artist, Gordon, seems the least disposed to verbalize. (The prolonged, repetitive and contrived nature of the discussions about art, timelessness, etc. among the characters contributes in no small measure to the novel's overly-literary quality. One is certainly inclined to prefer deeds to words after reading even small portions.) Similarly, in Intruder in the Dust, while Gavin Stevens talks about the ideal of justice, it is Chick and Miss Habersham who save Lucas. In her essay "Gavin Stevens: From Rhetoric to Dialectic," Faulkner Studies, II (Spring 1953), pp. 1-4, Olga Vickery traces what she feels to be a development in Gavin Stevens from his first appearance in Light in August, where he attempts, as an observer, to reconstruct the past rationally, and indulges his enjoyment of generalizing from past events, to a final stage in Requiem for a Nun, where Stevens has discovered that words are neither ends in themselves, nor instruments of judgment.

[5]Goethe, Faust, trans. C.F. MacIntyre (New York: New Directions, 1949), p. 164.

[6]Ibid., p. 129.

[7]Although, ironically, he is one of the Faulknerian idealists to whom words are a natural medium, Gavin Stevens makes just this observation about words in The Town when he says that the words for "honour," "reputation," "virginity," etc. destroy the timeless qualities of the principle because they indicate pastness. In a sense, words work against the idealist who uses them because they doom to finitude his ideals. ". . . from the inviolable and proud integrity of principles they would become, reduce to, the ephemeral and already doomed

and damned fragility of human conditions . . . existing only in the past tense was and now is not, no more no more." The Town, p. 202. Hereafter, this work is cited as T in parentheses within the body of the text.

[8]This abstract kind of motivation has not been universally convincing to the critics. In referring to Quentin's section, Richard Chase has described the time symbols as having been "bootlegged into the book." He finds it difficult to discover a consistent and believable voice of Quentin as one can for the other characters--sometimes we hear the elaborate rhetoric of Joyce; sometimes, apparently, the abstract voice of the author himself; sometimes the sardonic vulgarity of some young man. For Chase, the symbols are too contrived and literary; he finds in Dilsey, by contrast, a character who exists in the real world, and, accordingly, appeals to our senses more fully. Chase, The American Novel and Its Tradition (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor, 1957), p. 229. In emphasizing the inconsistent and overly-literary quality of Quentin's section, Chase's view fails to take sufficiently into account its first-person narration. Quentin is not a portrait painted by some external point of view, and marred by lack of realism. Rather, he is that consciousness through which, in his section, the reader experiences the world. That he is predisposed to rhetorical turns of phrase and complex systems of symbolism is at the very core of a general incapacity to cope with reality, indeed, to exist in the real world. To ascribe Quentin's shortcomings to the section itself, and, correspondingly, to applaud Dilsey's virtues as reflecting superior narrative art is simplistic and misleading.

[9]The late nineteenth century mathematician George Cantor proved the mathematical impossibility of approaching infinity.

[10]Faulkner, The Hamlet (New York: Vintage Books, 1931), p. 185. Hereafter, this work will be cited as H in parentheses within the body of the text.

[11]William Shakespeare, The Tempest, IV, i, 148-156.

[12]F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby (New York: Scribner, 1925), p. 100.

[13]Sartre, Literary Essays, p. 88.

[14]Adams deals with stasis as a means of demonstrating the universal motion by which it is surrounded. But the kind of relative stasis of the treadmill achieved through the exact equivalence of time and motion seems to suggest, rather, a way of escaping from temporal momentum, that is, to be immersed in the flow of time.

[15]The use of antithesis is examined at some length by Walter J. Slatoff in Quest for Failure: A Study of William Faulkner

(Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1960). He includes chapters dealing, for example, with motion and immobility, sound and silence, and quiescence and turbulence.

[16]Faulkner, The Wild Palms (New York: The New American Library, 1968), p. 61. Hereafter, this work will be cited as WP in parentheses within the body of the text.

[17]It is interesting to note that the convict comes to sense that time, and not water, is his enemy. In a sense, this cataclysm of nature indicates the fact that the stream of time has flooded its banks. Natural time becomes an artificial construct; it is "truncated, anachronic and unreal" (WP 129) and is compared to the "waxing and waning of lights in a theatre" (WP 129). Even the days "would wane toward no evening" (WP 113). Just as space loses its progressive distinctiveness and the sense of motion and distance becomes meaningless, so time can no longer be measured; the relative standards have been erased. ". . . the intervening days . . . telescoped, vanished as if they had never been, the two contiguous, succeeding instants (succeeding? simultaneous) and he transported across no intervening space. . ." (WP 130).

[18]The treadmill image receives one of its few comic treatments in Chick Mallison's description near the beginning of The Town of the rise of Snopesism in Jefferson. Once Flem has established the machinery of Snopesism, he simply inserts one of his endless fellow Snopeses into each successive stage. The effect has all the appearance of motionless motion except, of course, that Flem is continually acquiring and expanding (position, money, respectability) at the top of the hierarchy. "Because in six months Snopes had not only eliminated the partner from the restaurant, Snopes himself was out of it, replaced behind the greasy counter and in the canvas tent too by another Snopes accreted in from Frenchman's Bend into the vacuum behind the first one's next advancement by the same kind of osmosis by which, according to Ratliff, they had covered Frenchman's Bend, the chain unbroken, every Snopes in Frenchman's Bend moving up one step leaving that last slot at the bottom open for the next Snopes to appear from nowhere and fill, which without doubt he had already done. . . ." (T 8-9)

[19]Paradoxically (as Sartre suggests by his use of the term "frozen speed," Literary Essays, p. 81), the more uncompromising the motion, the more pronounced the effect of suspension and immobility. Clearly, this suggests a relationship between space and time--more particularly, a spatial, visual orientation of time--which, despite its psychological overtones, has a distinctly un-Bergsonian flavour. In his concept of duration, Bergson seeks to purify time, by removing its spatial dependence (as part of its accumulated intellectual encumbrances).

[20]Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby, p. 111.

[21]Lawrance Thompson, in his essay "Mirror Analogues in The Sound and the Fury," English Institute Essays 1952 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954), pp. 83-106, finds this scene to be the most elaborate mirror analogue of the entire section of the novel, the situation comprising a distorted mirror image of the past. Quentin and the little Italian girl are a kind of reflection of the Quentin and Caddy of the past. Quentin's overwhelming sense of this analogy constitutes, in Thompson's view, a further abnegation on Quentin's part of any real responsibility for the past, for Caddy's fate. If he is so patently innocent of the charge "You steala my seester" in the present, he regards himself as analagously innocent in the case of his real sister in the past.

[22]William Shakespeare, Macbeth, V, v, 22-23.

[23]Thomas Sutpen recognizes time, rather than a multitude of other factors, to be the real adversary to the realization of his Design. See Absalom, Absalom!, pp. 181, 261, 278-279.

[24]Schopenhauer in his essay "On the Suffering of the World" senses this basic enmity between man and finite time: "Not the least of the torments which plague our existence is the constant pressure of time. . . . It ceases to persecute only him it has delivered over to boredom." Schopenhauer, Essays and Aphorisms, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), p. 42.

[25]See, for example, Dilsey's clock, The Sound and the Fury, p. 375. She is able to resolve the contradiction by reference to some inner sense of time.

[26]Schopenhauer, p. 51.

[27]See also Absalom, Absalom!, p. 324. Sin is described by Shreve as being irrevocable and timeless: ". . . the dreamy immeasurable coupling which floats oblivious above the tramelling and harried instant, the: was-not: is: was: is a perquisite only of balloony and weightless elephants and whales: but maybe if there were sin too maybe you would not be permitted to escape, uncouple, return. -- Aint that right?".

[28]Cervantes, Don Quixote, trans. J.M. Cohen (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1950), p. 116.

[29]Like Quentin, Gavin Stevens is profoundly disturbed by the fact that even grief and anguish are subject to finite time. "And good-bye. The sad word, even over the telephone. I mean, not the word is sad or the meaning of it, but that you can really say it, that the time comes always in time when you can say it without grief and anguish now but without even the memory of grief and anguish" (T 214).

[30]Sartre notes that everything has already happened in The Sound and the Fury. The future is past. Sartre, Literary Essays.

[31]See also "The Bear." In order to see Old Ben, Ike must relinquish his watch and compass, both machines of spatial measurement. "It was the watch and the compass. He was still tainted" (GDM 208). The contrast between mechanical and natural time is reaffirmed by Ash: "Ash didn't even look at the watch. 'That's town time. You aint in town now. You in the woods.'" (GDM 323)

[32]In "The Fire and the Hearth" Roth Edmonds recognizes and is, amusingly, quite exasperated to find that the Negro, Lucas Beauchamp, is not vulnerable to the kind of time erosion that he himself is: Edmonds sees Lucas as "impervious to time" (GDM 118). Lucas' face "at sixty-seven looked actually younger than his own at forty-three, showed less of the ravages of passions and thought and satieties and frustrations than his own. . ." (GDM 118). Lucas not only represents a transcendence over chronology but is able to encompass past, present and future. "He is both heir and prototype simultaneously. . ." (GDM 118).

[33]In Adams' terms, she does not try to stand against the current, but is immersed in it. Thus, she is not battered in an attempt to remain immobile facing upstream.

[34]"While she stood there the clock above the cupboard struck ten times. 'One oclock,' she said aloud. . ." (SF 375).

[35]As Perrin Lowrey notes, Dilsey's section places the fall of the Compson family in an historical context. In this way, it stands in conceptual opposition to Benjy's section which presents only immediate sensory images. Perrin Lowrey, "Concepts of Time in The Sound and the Fury," English Institute Essays 1952, pp. 57-82.

[36]Ibid. Dilsey takes for granted the sense of time as a continuum. The Easter Sunday service at Dilsey's church assumes the concept of eternity--and it is a source of both joy and solace to the participants.

[37]See Faulkner's Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech, 1950, in James B. Meriwether, ed., Essays, Speeches and Public Letters by William Faulkner (New York: Random House, 1966), pp. 119-121.

[38]The association of mechanical time with the impulse towards acquisition, and conversely, larger designs of time with a repudiation of ownership is central to Go Down, Moses. In "Delta Autumn," Ike McCaslin, who has rejected the whole notion of possession, explains that to own land is to destroy it as a heritage: "once more the untreed land warped and wrung to mathematical squares of rank cotton for the frantic old-world people to turn into shells to shoot

at one another. . ." (GDM 354), The wilderness "belonged to no man. It belonged to all; they had only to use it well, humbly and with pride" (GDM 354). By rejecting the concept of individual acquisition, Ike can move in harmony with a larger concept of time wherein the past is not lost. "He seemed to see the two of them--himself and the wilderness--as coevals . . . the two spans running out together, not toward oblivion, nothingness, but into a dimension free of both time and space. . ." (GDM 354).

[39]This is precisely the effect noted in Proust by Roger Shattuck in Proust's Binoculars. He refers to an "optics of time," a kind of temporal depth perception which produces a union of past and present, or rather the recognition of the past inhabiting the present, provoked by the involuntary evocation of a past sensation by a present one. The fact that Benjy makes no intellectual distinctions between past and present only facilitates the process. He does not remember; he relives. According to Shattuck's analysis, memories cannot evoke the past, because something remembered is something subject to the accumulated changes wrought by time. Only something entirely forgotten, or in some way wholly absent from the conscious mind, can be summoned up intact from the past. Shattuck, Proust's Binoculars: a study of memory, time and recognition in 'A La Recherche du Temps Perdu' (New York: Vintage Books, 1967).

[40]Bertrand Russell, Wisdom of the West (New York: Crescent Books, 1959), p. 293. Russell takes logical exception to Bergson's analysis of "duration" as fluid and continuous by suggesting that simultaneity of time is, linguistically, untenable.

[41]Lawrance Thompson, "Mirror Analogues in The Sound and the Fury," describes a whole system of mirror analogues in which the mirror is not only Benjy's means of ordering and intensifying his positive experiences, but Benjy himself functions as Caddy's moral mirror. Quentin, in contrast, elicits only negative values and death images from mirrors. See also Olga Vickery, "The Shadow and the Mirror: Light in August," in The Novels of William Faulkner: A Critical Interpretation (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1959).

[42]T.S. Eliot, "Burnt Norton," Four Quartets, p. 191.

[43]Again, the Negroes as a group are presented as closely affiliated with the larger, cyclical time of nature.

[44]Richard Chase, "The Stone and the Crucifixion: Faulkner's Light in August," The Kenyon Review (Autumn, 1948), pp. 531-551, finds the images of motion and motionlessness in the novel to reflect a space rather than a time consciousness. Certainly, the novel is permeated by a sense of expansiveness which seems to apply, in an imprecise way, to both time and space.

[45]Faulkner, "Centaur in Brass," Collected Stories (New York: Random House, 1950), p. 142.

[46]In many ways, Joe is trapped in the nightmare world of the Kafka character. The more vigorously and desperately he searches for meaning and certainty, the more it eludes his grasp. See Kafka, The Castle.

[47]It is interesting that Hightower's time consciousness is described in much the same way. So implacably does mechanical time order his thoughts that the clock becomes merely redundant. "He knows almost to the second when he should being to hear [the distant music], without recourse to watch or clock. He uses neither, has needed neither for twentyfive years now. He lives dissociated from mechanical time. Yet for that reason he has never lost it. It is as though out of his subconscious he produces without volition the few crystallizations of stated instances by which his dead life in the actual world had been governed and ordered once" (LA 345-346). As for Joe Christmas, internalized clock-time turns Hightower toward the past. See also Quentin's inability to obliterate clock time merely by turning his watch face down or tearing off its hands.

[48]See Vickery, "The Shadow and the Mirror: Light in August."

[49]This same question of the relationship between the past and the present is vividly presented in Faulkner's story "Hair," in which the past is seen as a debt, a mortgage to be paid off. Only when Hawkshaw has come to terms with the past can he pursue a meaningful relationship in the present. Faulkner, Collected Stories, p. 147. Hightower sees the pattern of his life as derived from a bargain with ongoing time. If he agrees to become a social recluse and deny himself any social pleasures, time is to honour his exemption from the need to become involved in and responsible for human affairs, the exigencies of the present. He feels he has bought the right to be an observer on the banks of the stream of time. "I wont. I wont. I have bought immunity. . . . I paid for it. I didn't quibble about the price. No man can say that. I just wanted peace; I paid them their price without quibbling!" (LA 293).

[50]This is what Watkins would see as his translation from word to deed.

CHAPTER IV

> . . . his very body was an empty hall echoing with sonorous defeated names; he was not a being, an entity, he was a commonwealth. He was a barracks filled with stubborn back-looking ghosts still recovering, even forty-three years afterward, from the fever which had cured the disease . . . (AA 12)

The characters discussed in Chapter Tree organize their experiences of the world according to some sense of time, ranging from complete adjustment to the cycles of nature to the most elaborate kind of intellectual/rational analysis. In addition to time as a phenomenon based on individual subjectivity, time in Faulkner operates on a broader level--it is clear in certain novels that a group vision of time emerges. Aspects of the past so permeate the present that they become the emotional/intellectual centre of a social time consciousness on the one hand historical, on the other mythical or legendary.[1] Characters who define themselves, however indistinctly, in terms of a group--many Faulknerian characters identify themselves racially, for example, or geographically--inevitably take into account the larger designs of time. These do not reflect a development or refinement on the part of the author: the individual's relationship to legend and history, while a factor in much of Faulkner, is most strikingly present in three novels widely spaced in his career--Sartoris, Absalom, Absalom!, and Go Down, Moses.

Sartoris is, in large part, an exploration of the death-dealing potential of legend when it functions as a pattern or mould for the present. This tyranny of the past becomes what Adams[2] would

regard as an artificial obstacle planted against the motion of time in order to demonstrate its force all the more dramatically. Just as Addie, in her own small circle of family and friends, exists more powerfully and persuasively in death than in life, Colonel John Sartoris, "freed as he was of time and flesh" (Sar 19), extends his influence, his "ineradicable bones" (Sar 20), beyond finite time. One has only to compare this timeless presence (against which every living Sartoris measures himself, consciously or not) to old Bayard and Falls, "drawn thin by the slow attenuation of days," to realize that in the development of legend, human flesh is a positive hindrance to the transcendence of "sheer years" (LA 343). In the first scene of Sartoris, it is the dead Colonel to whom all substantial reality belongs. "He was far more palpable than the two old men cemented by a common deafness to a dead period. . . ." (Sar 19).[3]

Death is the prerequisite of legend; it releases human endeavour from the corrosion of time. While old Bayard and Falls are fashioned of "mere transiently articulated clay," Colonel Sartoris has transcended the normal course of human mortality; he hovers, perpetually present, ". . . above and about his son," like an odour. The presence of the past is continually compared to an odour, indisputable, inescapable, yet not always identifiable.[4]

Colonel Sartoris' tooth-marked pipe constitutes a fossil record of this legendary past. It is an artifact of an extinct prehistoric species "too grandly conceived and executed either to exist very long or to vanish utterly when dead from an earth shaped and furnished for punier things" (Sar 20). That Colonel Sartoris rep-

resents an anomaly of human mortality is further dramatized by old man Falls' returning the pipe to Bayard with the explanation that "I'm gwine on ninety-fo' year old" (Sar 20). This clay artifact will outlast old man Falls, as the latter senses; finite and infinite are again juxtaposed.

The Sartoris house is described as a theatre which exists purely for the "diversion of him whose stubborn dream, flouting him so deviously and cunningly while the dream was impure, had shaped itself fine and clear, now that the dreamer was purged of the grossness . . . of flesh" (Sar 103). A second theatre image indicates that the parlour is a stage with ghosts in the wings (Sar 64). Evidently, the present for the Sartorises is only a dramatized rendering of the past, one stage removed from reality. The nature of everyone's part is already defined in the script of the legend and no one is encouraged to improvise.

It is to this ghost-filled theatre that young Bayard returns from the war, a war that has the same kind of relation to the romantic heroism of the Civil War as it appears in the Sartoris legend, as the Colonel's derringer has to the cavalry sabre, rapier and duelling pistols. The derringer "lay like a cold and deadly insect between two flowers" (Sar 86). The other weapons are associated with the defense of honour, part of their function being purely decorative like gold braid trim on a uniform. But the derringer's purpose is solely to kill, and it is a practical and effective weapon. "That 'ere dang der'nger" is the source of the Colonel's downfall, according to Falls; it represents the intrusion of the fact of death--grim,

efficient, cold--into a heroic past of daring deeds and noble gestures. As Falls notes, the ability to kill, the lack of respect for human life, becomes in itself a death trap. "That 'us when hit changed. When he had to start killin' folks , . . when a feller has to start killin' folks, he 'most always has to keep on killin' 'em. And when he does, he's already dead hisself" (Sar 35). Acts of destruction become a self-perpetuating pattern which imposes the past on the future.[5]

As for Hightower, Bayard, then, has an inheritance of death. The Johns and Bayards (and the Sartorises use only these two names, alternately) listed in fading ink in the brass-bound Bible, have died courting destruction in very offhand and memorable ways, which have gradually taken on legendary coloration through time and the obliteration of the "clumsy cluttering of bones and breath". The "hare-brained prank" becomes a "gallant and finely tragic focal point"; recklessness becomes tragedy. The process through which historical fact becomes legend is time, distance in time distilling the emotional essence of the historical act, bringing together only those details which are most evocative of the spirit of the act, and releasing them from the bonds of finite time. In a sense, legend is the collective process of selective remembering; it is a translation from finite to infinite time.[6]

The dual aspect of the process of legend as memory and suppression of memory is nowhere more clearly presented in Faulkner than in the presentation of both the historical and legendary "facts" of the Sartoris ancestors in chapter one. The descriptions of the

first Bayard and Jeb Stuart have almost mythic reverberations. While the latter is compared to a centaur (Sar 28), the former is said to be akin, in his "frank and high-hearted dullness" (Sar 25), to Richard I embarking on one of his colourful if futile crusades. Richard is an embodiment of the ambiguity of the past; his courage and daring are legendary, but like Bayard, he regarded war as a game. No principles are involved in this risking of human life, only the spirit of adventure and fun. Similarly, the relationship to time of Bayard and Jeb Stuart is likened to "two flaming stars garlanded with Fame's burgeoning laurel and the myrtle and roses of Death. . . , And still in the spirit of pure fun" (Sar 26). The dangerous whim of Stuart's ride for the coffee is described, in a fashion not entirely condemning, as revealing "the wild and self-consuming splendour of his daring" (Sar 28). The Sartoris tradition, like the King Richard legend, is death-oriented and inhumane, but also dashing and gallant. Its gestures are splendid if futile, heroic if reckless. Gradually, this golden world of joyous and graceful abandon acquires an atmosphere charged with the sinister and black: "a nameless something -- a tenseness seeping from tree to tree like an invisible mist, filling the dewy morning woods with portent" (Sar 29), ". . . that nameless and waiting portent, patient and brooding and sinister. . ." (Sar 30). Death and fear are implicit in all heroic gestures of the Sartoris variety, and materialize with the captured major who represents the objective, realistic attitude to war. "This is not bravery: it is the rashness of a heedless and headstrong boy" (Sar 30). Stuart wants to provide the captive major, as an officer, with a horse, according to the

Southern code of gentlemanly behavior; the major sees this chivalric gesture not only as an absurdity ("No gentleman has any business in this war. . . . There is no place for him here. He is an anachronism, like anchovies . . ." (Sar 30), but as a callous irresponsibility toward human life. "Will General Stuart, cavalry leader and General Lee's eyes, jeopardize his safety and that of his men and his cause in order to provide for the temporary comfort of a minor prisoner to his sword?" (Sar 30).

Young Bayard's first line in the novel suggests "the dark shadow of fatality and doom" (Sar 35) that the past casts over the present. "I tried to keep him from going up there in that goddam little pop gun" (Sar 51). The death of Bayard's twin brother John is, in the perspective of the Sartoris legend, a dashing and heroic one, yet, as his brother senses, in the perspective of the present, an absurd waste of human potential. The past and the present, then, operate as a death-life polarity in young Bayard.[7]

He is surrounded by a ritualistic, formalistic mode of life which daily reasserts the extension of the past, a pre-Civil War past, into the present and suggests, as Sartre notes, that time has been decapitated.[8] Yet the rituals, such as old Bayard's departure from the bank in a horse-drawn carriage, which constitute and define the Sartoris aristocracy are essentially anachronistic;[9] they are seen to stand in opposition to reality, to the present. The Sartoris legend cannot stop time, or even render it discontinuous. "Sartorises had derided Time, but Time was not vindictive, being longer

than Sartorises. And probably unaware of them" (Sar 87). Evidence that time passes, despite the attempts of the Sartorises to stop it, abounds in the novel. The ritual of old Bayard's departure from the bank is a "testy disregard of industrial progress" (Sar 20). The first automobiles, and the dramatic change of pace they effect, have appeared. The landed aristocracy finds itself, most unwillingly, in an industrialized democratic age, and as it cannot adapt, must appear ridiculous.

Another link to the ancestral past is Bayard's ritual of sitting at the hearth, or his re-enactment of the past in watching the train just as Colonel John had done. The world has changed: "now the railway belonged to a syndicate and there were more than two trains on it" (Sar 50). The railroad continues and expands "while John Sartoris slept among martial cherubim and the useless vainglory of whatever God he did not scorn to recognize" (Sar 5-); The "ancient laborious ritual" of the past is nowhere more clearly seen to be absurdly inappropriate to the present than in Simon, who exploits every aristocratic gesture to its full dramatic potential. This is the source of his extreme exasperation with young Bayard's indecorous arrival home: "Sneaking into town on de ve'y railroad his own granpappy built; jes' like he wuz trash" (Sar 22). Just as the nonchalant gallantry which suffuses the legendary Civil War stories is undercut by common sense,[10] the portrait of Simon as the loyal and steadfast family retainer who talks to the long-dead Colonel, is adjusted, amusingly, by the evidence of his untrustworthiness with respect to money and his obvious manipulation of

the traditional role for his own financial benefit. The presentation of Caspey, returned from war with "two honourable wounds incurred in a razor-hedged crap game" (Sar 64), is an ironic comment on the whole concept of military glory which is such a problematic one for young Bayard.

Miss Jenny, too, embodies a kind of duality with respect to the Sartoris legend. In one way, she undercuts the aura of glamourous fatality surrounding the Sartoris tradition of gallant and gentlemanly death, exposing it as a foolish indulgence of a histrionic urge: "these bullheaded Sartorises" (Sar 42).[11] But she is also one of the perpetrators of the legend, telling and re-telling the story of the Civil War exploits of the Colonel and Bayard until time acts upon the trivial event:

> . . . as she grew older, the tale itself grew richer and richer and richer, taking on a mellow splendor like wine; until what had been a harebrained prank of two heedless and reckless boys wild with their own youth had become a gallant and finely tragical focal point to which the history of the race had been raised from out the old miasmic swamps of spiritual sloth by two angels valiantly fallen and strayed, altering the course of human events and purging the souls of men. (Sar 25)

That the legend is not, for Miss Jenny, a source of Bayard's self-destructive nihilism is attributable to her basic womanly common sense with respect to the dual nature of the past; she admires the graces and style, what one might call the civilized forms of an era past, without feeling any compulsion to conform to its barbaric content.[12] Her unfavourable comparison of young Bayard to the Bayard of Jeb Stuart's high-spirited circle is not based on the former's carelessness about human life and his continuing flirtation with

death, for these she recognizes to be intrinsic as well in the characters of the Sartoris legend. Rather, she is disgusted by the cold and methodical way in which young Bayard seems to be planning his own destruction, in striking contrast to the passion and colour of his progenitors. "But he was a gentleman: he raised the devil like a gentleman, not like you Mississippi country people. Clod-hoppers. Look what he did with just a horse. . ." (Sar 190). Dale Sorenson[13] notes that although Miss Jenny does perpetuate the Sartoris legend, she does not act as though it were the only reality. She exists substantially in the present, continually associated with nature--her flower garden.[14]

Thus, although the heroics of Southern gentlemen, according to Miss Jenny's comments, are to be treated as a particularly male kind of wastrel stupidity,[15] there is a special sense of colour, glamour and sociability about the Southern past whose loss evokes nostalgia, even sadness.[16] Although the past should not be permitted to function as a blueprint for the present, the present should not thereby be construed as superior, or even as admirable. Clearly, modern society, in Sartoris, represents in many ways a decline from the past: it is mechanized, depersonalized and materialistic. If the Sartorises are foolish, the Snopeses are terrifying as an alternative.[17]

The contrasting spirits of past and present are juxtaposed in the old and young doctors, and the old and young setters. The "homely humanity" of old Doctor Peabody appears to be in no way a match for the analytical diagnosis of the younger doctor, yet Dr. Peabody's old-fashioned remedy, supported by admonitions to the

patient that "You'd be about as well off dead, anyhow" (Sar 93), is perfectly adequate to old Bayard's condition. In the case of the two setters, the younger is "in pursuit of the maddening elusive smells with which the world surrounded him and tempted him" (Sar 44). He is totally immersed in the present, in the world of immediate sensation, whereas the older dog exists in the same realm as old Bayard; his life is a ritualized repetition of the past. Every day at the same time he waits for old Bayard, and every day at the same time, old Bayard expects to see his dog.

It is young Bayard's misfortune to possess the spirit of the young setter and to be trapped in the context of the old setter. He returns from the war to "the house that John Sartoris had built" (Sar 23), to an existence which defines itself almost completely in reference to an heroic past. "There was a bed of salvia where a Yankee patrol had halted on a day long ago" (Sar 23). The house itself evokes the past; it "was silent, richly desolate of motion or any sound" (Sar 23). The self-destructive violence of young Bayard, which manifests itself in a passion for speed, derives from the imposition of the past on the present. Bayard's "old terror" is to be at once "mad for life" and obsessed by death. He is "trapped in the very cunning fabric that had betrayed him who had dared change too much" (Sar 170). He defies time in a coldly mechanical way; speed fascinates him because of the way in which it appears to consume time, and, almost sensually, because of its potential to destroy. The past is like the choking omnipresence of dust which incapacitates normal breathing. "He was thinking of his

dead brother; the spirit of their violent complementing days lay like dust everywhere in the room, obliterating that other presence. . ." (Sar 113). In retrospect, he offers a fatalistic interpretation of the aftermath of the Yankee patrol episode, in which he looks at his face in the water and sees a skull. "Was. Fatality: the augury of a man's destiny peeping out at him from the roadside hedge, if he but recognize it. . ." (Sar 88).

As Sorenson notes in his article, natural time in Sartoris provides a very powerful opposition to the violent motion and past-centred destructiveness of young Bayard. The all-encompassing character of natural time submerges the human battle against time into insignificance, and even Bayard is soothed by his temporary association with the earth. His days are filled; his course towards self-destruction is diverted. He no longer drives with the sole purpose of creating fear. In entering, for a time, the sphere of natural time in his work on the farm, he has become "submerged in a monotony of days, has been snared by a rhythm of activities repeated and repeated until his muscles grew so familiar with them as to get his body through the days without assistance from him at all" (Sar 171). Time ceases to be an intellectual construct, and becomes almost a body rhythm, a component of life rather than a source of death. After sowing time, young Bayard returns once more to human finite time.

> Then sowing time was over and it was summer, and he found himself with nothing to do. It was like coming dazed out of sleep, out of the warm sunny valleys where people lived into a region where cold peaks of savage despair stood bleakly above the lost valleys, among black and savage stars. (Sar 171)

It is ironic that nature goes bankrupt for Bayard in summer, the season of warmth and growth and life. He returns to a universe permeated with the sense of death, a universe in which there is "nothing to do" which can be meaningful.

In contrast to Bayard, the Negroes function in harmony with natural time. They are "slow and aimless as figures of a dark, placid dream" (Sar 108).[18] The McCallums, too, have a close affiliation with the land, and exhibit the corresponding virtues: warmth and hospitality. They gain a sense of dignity and purpose from their tradition; as for Dilsey, it enriches their lives and enables them to remain adapted to their environment. For Buddy McCallum, the war is simply a memory, not a legend based on "doomed immortality and immortal doom" (Sar 113).

The Snopeses, too, constitute an alternative to Bayard in the way in which they function in the present. Morally contemptible as they are, they have a sense of purpose, however self-serving, and, manifestly, the ability to act in achieving this purpose.[19] In this way, they maintain and increase their ascendancy over those doomed to re-enact the past, those who attempt to shield themselves intellectually from the present, and those who represent the empty gestures of tradition without any of its substance.

If legend is to exist as a focus for the socio-historical consciousness, it must, as Vickery notes,[20] function as a human symbol, not as a behavioral code. Although the circumstances of their responses to the past differ, Quentin, Hightower and young Bayard all make the same perceptual error. They permit, even encourage, the erection of

the past as a barrier between themselves and their experiences of the world. They misunderstand, essentially, the role of history and the nature of legend. This misunderstanding, on a grand scale, is at the core of Thomas Sutpen's design in Absalom, Absalom!. If young Bayard Sartoris misuses an existing legend as a design for his own life, Sutpen thinks he can create and exploit his own legend, and so transcend finite time and the indignity of his own transience. What Sutpen fails to appreciate is that legend, although timeless, has its genesis in time; it evolves out of a common pool of historical constructs through time, and cannot be produced and imposed wilfully on society. There is no other Faulknerian character who so forcefully and singlemindedly goes about translating his own vision of time into action.[21]

In attempting to reconstruct and interpret Thomas Sutpen's career, each of the narrators is impressed by the ferocious haste he exhibits in all his endeavours, a kind of "fever mental or physical--of a need for haste, of time fleeing beneath him. . ." (AA 34). He regards finite time, his own mortality, as the most powerful threat to the achievement of his design--in a sense, the nature of the design itself exacerbates the struggle. It sets in motion forces that hasten the very changes it was created to extinguish, and balance him, increasingly, "against the imponderable weight of the changed new time itself as though he were trying to dam a river with his bare hands and a shingle" (AA 162). In Adams' terms, to place oneself so irrevocably against the current of time is to demonstrate all the more dramatically its force. Unlike Dilsey, who unconsciously resists

the notion of doing battle with finite time and thereby exhibits relative stasis, Sutpen explicitly designates time as a foe to be overcome.[22] Quentin describes this enmity, signifcantly, as that sensed by "the show girl, the pony, who realizes that the principal tune she prances comes not from horn and fiddle and drum but from a clock and calendar. . ." (AA 181).[23] Rosa, too, talks about Sutpen's "electric furious immobile urgency and awareness of short time and the need for haste" (AA 160). His proposal to Rosa reveals the terrible desperation of a man who realizes "that there was more in his problem than just lack of time, that that problem contained some super-distillation of this lack. . ." (AA 279). Like Jason, Sutpen has a sense of time ever shortening before him like a tape measure, "time shortening ahead of him that could and would do things to his chances and possibilities" (AA 261).

Sutpen's design is created very specifically with a view to nullifying this tendency of finite linear time to reduce all achievements, all individuals, to an identical insignificance wherein "nothing is even worth the changing of it."[24] Ironically, his rational and methodical plan for doing battle with transience issues from a brief moment in his past, which, like Rosa's moment of outrage, can only be described as timeless. He is sent by his father on an errand to a large plantation house. Upon knocking at the front door, he is told by the Negro "to go around to the back door even before he could state his errand" (AA 233). In that brief moment of rejection, he sees himself as the world sees him, a nameless, faceless, wholly indistinguishable representative of an indiscrim-

inate group,[25] and decides that he can not and will not live with this self-concept.[26] ". . . he would have to do something about it in order to live with himself for the rest of his life. . ." (AA 234).

Out of this never-receding moment, then, comes the impetus simultaneously to re-examine the past[27] and to create a future to fit him alone: "he said how he thought there was something about a man's destiny (or about the man) that caused the destiny to shape itself to him like his clothes did. . ." (AA 246). As Douglas M. Thomas notes in his perceptive essay, "Memory-Narrative in Absalom, Absalom!,"[28] much of the hallucinatory quality of the novel derives from its arrangement around a small number of highly charged visual-emotional instants, rather than in conventional time-action sequence.[29] Sutpen's moment of rejection is one of these, the reverberations of which are felt even in succeeding generations; the moment of Sutpen's proposal to Rosa is another: "my life was destined to end on an afternoon in April forty-three years ago. . ." (AA 18). For Rosa, time stops at this moment. She no longer processes the reality of the present: "living is one constant and perpetual instant" (AA 142). Her account of Thomas Sutpen, thus, is infused with one emotion, hate, and describes in him one quality, evil.[30]

Another moment of timelessness is the instant in which Henry kills Bon. It is to this moment that Quentin, Shreve and Mr. Compson continually return, fascinated, certain that in it is to be found the essence of the entire Sutpen story. Rosa regards the shot, not as an instantaneous sensation remembered, but as a permanent blockage in the flow of time.[31]

> No, there had been no shot. That sound was merely the sharp and final clap-to of a door between us and all that was, all that might have been--a retroactive severance of the stream of events: a forever crystallized instant in imponderable time. . . (AA 158).

This instant, so unreal in itself, alters, irrevocably, subsequent perceptions: it "stop[s] us dead as though by some impalpable intervention, like a sheet of glass through which we watch all subsequent events transpire as though in a soundless vacuum, and face, vanish. . ." (AA 151). As we come to place the fall of Sutpen in the larger context of the fall of the South, the moment of the shot is pivotal to our realization that time in its broader conception is cyclical, that future crime is built into past crime,[32] and, hence, that the moment of the shot is perpetually present in time, even before it occurs in space.

Quentin presents rather a different image of the nature of an event in time when he suggests that

> maybe nothing happens once and is finished. Maybe happen is never once but like ripples maybe on water after the pebble sinks, the ripples moving on, spreading, the pool attached by a narrow umbilical watercord to the next pool which the first pool feeds, has fed, did feed. . . . (AA 261)

If the moral consequences of an event expand into time or rather if time <u>is</u> this kind of centrifugal ripple motion, then, Quentin concludes, Thomas Sutpen is the first cause, the father of us all.[33]

> Yes, we are both Father. Or maybe Father and I are both Shreve, maybe it took Father and me both to make Shreve or Shreve and me both to make Father or maybe Thomas Sutpen to make all of us. (AA 262)

While Sutpen is presented by Rosa as the incarnation of evil, he is cast in the classical tragic hero mould by Mr. Compson,

who sees innocence as his tragic flaw. "He couldn't even realize yet that his trouble, his impediment, was innocence. . ." (AA 233). For Mr. Compson, Sutpen's innocence is an ignorance of social reality so all-pervasive that his moment of rejection becomes the focus of all his experience, both antecedent and following, and the basis of his rationally conceived design.[34] In large measure, it is Sutpen's vision of time that constitutes his innocence. His working assumption about the nature of time is that it is composed of a series of divisions--discrete and measurable--which can only operate as a continuum when man wilfully imposes some kind of order upon it. Thus, every time he must begin anew his attempt to realize his design for timelessness, he simply denies, wholly, the past, whether it be an unfortunate marriage, a child, or a number of years.

> He did not pause, did not take that day or two to let the bones and flesh of fifty-nine recuperate--the day or two in which he might have talked, not about us and what we had been doing, but about himself, the past four years (for all he ever told us, there might not have been any war at all, or it on another planet and no stake of his risked on it, no flesh and blood of his to suffer by it). . . . (AA 161)

He fails utterly to realize that the past is built into every present experience; it cannot be repudiated, but rather its sins must be expiated, even in succeeding generations. A design which formally opposes this continuing process of time, in denying any responsibility for the past, is doomed to eventual frustration, and makes Sutpen vulnerable to Bon, the embodiment of his past.[35] It is interesting that Sutpen, who is convinced that man can manipulate time at will, and who therefore sets out to carve a legendary, timeless past from

the future,[36] is himself continually described as having no past. "So he knew neither where he had come from nor where he was nor why. He was just there"[37] (AA 227). He rides into Jefferson "out of no discernible past" (AA 11) and systematically arranges to acquire one, in the person of Ellen Coldfield whose dowry is, essentially, traditional respectability.[38]

Sutpen's Hundred is a creation in space analagous to his design for time. Just as he tries to wrench a dynasty from the future, and so defeat finite time, so Sutpen's Hundred is to be an eternal monument to his immortality,[39] an order imposed on the "tranquil and astonished earth . . . out of the soundless Nothing" (AA 8). In the Civil War and the unstable period which follows, Sutpen's Hundred is gradually reduced to Sutpen's One. Dust returns to "biding and dreamy and victorious dust"; the great cycle of natural time is not to be obstructed.[40]

It is Sutpen's singular view of the process of time which makes chronology and causality so inappropriate to an account of his career. Time is telescoped, irregularly, and frequently must be inferred from space. It is only the substantial distance between Virginia and Haiti that suggests, to Quentin's grandfather, the passage of time in Sutpen's story; it otherwise evinces that "reason-flouting" simultaneity of dreams, the motionless motion quality whereby cause and effect, indeed all time, is condensed into hallucinatory images. In Sutpen's account, everything "seemed to have occurred with a sort of violent abrogation which must have been almost as short as his telling about it--a very condensation of time which

was the gauge of its own violence" (AA 249). Quentin senses this same effect as he listens to Miss Rosa:

> Then in the long unamaze Quentin seemed to watch them overrun suddenly the hundred square miles of tranquil and astonished earth and drag house and formal gardens violently out of the soundless Nothing and clap them down like cards upon a table beneath the up-palm immobile and pontific, creating the Sutpen's Hundred. . . (AA 8-9)

The most dramatic and decisive of events have, at once, no measurable extension in time, and no discernible beginning or ending. They share the ultimately paradoxical nature of a character like Bon: he has in a sense both always existed and, in that he is doomed even before his birth, never existed. The shot which kills Bon is both the final proof and the final denial of his existence. ". . . he was absent, and he was; he returned, and he was not; three women put something into the earth and covered it, and he had never been" (AA 153). In giving Bon's letter to Quentin's grandmother, Judith explains that a thing must die in order to have lived, a view of time which suggests that reality is only to be sought retrospectively.

> . . . at least it would be something just because it would have happened, be remembered even if only passing from one hand to another, one mind to another, and it would be at least a scratch, something, something that might make a mark on something that <u>was</u> once for the reason that it can die someday, while the block of stone cant be <u>is</u> because it never can become <u>was</u> because it cant ever die or perish. . .[41] (AA 127-128).

Sutpen's descendants are "stubborn back-looking ghosts" (AA 12), condemned forever to expiate the crimes of the past. For them, the future is largely an historical construct;[42] their only meaningful experiences derive from their relationships with the past.

Like Miss Rosa, they exist in a shadow world wherein one can hear the echo only, not the shot (AA 150). Like young Bayard Sartoris, they are spectators in a theatre in which the stage is dominated by a single figure who negates the process of time in a series of timeless images,

> like the mask in Greek tragedy, interchangeable not only from scene to scene, but from actor to actor and behind which the events and occasions took place without chronology or sequence, leaving her actually incapable of saying how many separate times she had seen him for the reason that, waking or sleeping, the aunt had taught her to see nothing else.[43]

Most of the characters of the novel, then, with the exception of Shreve who is not a Southerner, represent time anomalies: they are old before they are young--much older than simple chronology would suggest. Time, essentially, has stopped for them. Miss Rosa was "a child who had never been young" (AA 22), her childhood an "aged and ancient and timeless absence of youth . . . while she waited for the infancy and childhood with which nature had confounded and betrayed yer. . ." (AA 60).[44] Charles Bon, too, is a timeless creature: he "appeared almost phoenix-like, fullsprung from no childhood, born of no woman and impervious to time and vanished leaving no bones nor dust anywhere. . ." (AA 74). When Ellen becomes part of Sutpen's world, she "seemed to have encompassed time" (AA 75). Distinctions between past and future become academic: the future is as accomplished and final as the past. Judith and Henry do not develop as time passes--they spend their lives in atoning for the crimes of their father. It is in this curse that Sutpen's descendants must bear that the Sutpen story becomes an analogue to

the story of the South as a whole--this analogy is central to the narrative interpretation which forms the structural basis of the novel,[45] and provides the link between the individual and the social consciousness of time.

The time anomaly that renders Quentin "older at twenty than a lot of people who have died" (AA 377) is the inheritance of the South: the Southerner is but a shadowy extension of the Southern past into the present. "'The South,' Shreve said. 'The South. Jesus. No wonder you folks outlive yourselves by years and years and years'" (AA 377). As Shreve, the objective, rational Northerner, analyzes it, the Southerner lives in the kind of timeless vacuum wherein nothing every recedes in time.

> We dont live among defeated grandfathers and freed slaves . . . . What is it? something you live and breathe in like air? a kind of vacuum filled with wraithlike and indomitable anger and pride and glory at and in happenings that occurred and ceased fifty years ago? a kind of entailed birthright father and son and father and son of never forgiving General Sherman, so that forever more as long as your children's children produce children you wont be anything but a descendant of a long line of colonels killed in Pickett's charge an Manassas? (AA 361)

History is future as well as past, and the individual's shared responsibility for it is ineradicable. Indeed, history never becomes past enough even to be classified as memory.

> But you were not listening, because you knew it all already, had learned, absorbed it already without the medium of speech somehow from having been born and living beside it, with it, as children will and do: so that what your father was saying did not tell you anything so much as it struck, word by word, the resonant strings of remembering. (AA 213)

The past is like air to be breathed: Quentin is very much conscious

that he breathes the same air that Thomas Sutpen had breathed. This reaffirms, for him, an organic and continuing, indeed a visceral relationship with the past.[46]

As omnipresent as air, then, the history of the South represents both an inheritance and, as is frequently mentioned by all the narrators, fate or doom, operating as a curse on the South's descendants. As for the former, Shreve observes that the Southerner's relationship with the past creates a special sense of identity, the lack of which he notes in himself. The latter, as has been mentioned, derives from the capacity of the past to inhabit the present, demanding expiation in each generation. In this sense, fate is the agent of infinite time--not the liberating vision of infinity that Quentin espouses in The Sound and the Fury, but rather a sort of trap in which "not only a man never outlives his father, but not even his friends and acquaintances do" (AA 277).[47]

The present must assume responsibility for the cumulative past. Miss Rosa has chosen Quentin as the recipient of her story because "she considers [him] partly responsible through heredity for what happened to her and her family through him" (AA 13). Thomas Sutpen is present in all his descendants--the result is a sort of double role for them: they simultaneously are observers of and are themselves the ghosts of the past. The chronological time which has elapsed between Sutpen and Quentin has not served to erect a barrier between present and past, but only to inspire in the latter a certain self-conscious awareness of his double role.

> . . . he would seem to listen to two separate Quentins now--the Quentin Compson preparing for Harvard in the

> South, the deep South dead since 1865 and peopled with garrulous outraged baffled ghosts, listening, having to listen, to one of the ghosts which had refused to lie still even longer than most had, telling him about old ghost-times; and the Quentin Compson who was still too young to deserve yet to be a ghost, but nevertheless having to be one for all that, since he was born and bred in the deep South the same as she was-- (AA 9)

Hell, then, becomes a continuing process, because crime and guilt cannot exclusively be designated the responsibility of the past. Sutpen, his causes, and his effects are simultaneous.

> It isn't yours not his nor the Pope's hell that we are all going to: it's my mother's and her mother's and father's and their mother's and father's hell, and it isn't you who are going there, but we, the three - no: four of us. And so at least we will all be together where we belong, since even if only he went there we would still have to be there too since the three of us are just illusions that he begot and your illusions are a part of you like your bones and flesh and memory. (AA 347-348)

Among Faulkner's works, Absalom, Absalom! represents, perhaps, the most complete fusion of technique and theme.[48] The multiplicity of the means whereby we gradually come to know the story of Thomas Sutpen, and this story itself, suggest that time is alien to chronology and even, perhaps, to any linear model. The most striking feature of time is its simultaneity: the independent identities of past, present and future are an illusion. Thomas[49] ascribes the power of the novel to the way in which events group themselves around highly charged visual-emotional instants which have a five-dimensional flash effect (three visual dimensions plus sound and emotion). The timeless quality of these moments and their ability to contain past, present and future, are reinforced by a narrative method which affords us brief non-sequential glimpses,

partial disclosures and tentative interpretations. This imparts, as Hagan analyzes it,[50] a déjà-vu sensation to one's experiences of the novel--the sense of discovering things that one somehow already knows. The reader experiences time as simultaneous just as Ike in "The Bear" finds, at his first camp, that "he had experienced it all before, and not merely in dreams. . . . He saw the camp . . . and he knew already how it was going to look. He helped in the rapid orderly disorder of their establishment and even his motions were familiar to him foreknown" (GDM 195-196).

This static quality is the essence of the "furious immobility," the frozen motion, of the dream. The entire novel seems to have, as Quentin finds in Miss Rosa's story,

> that logic- and reason-flouting quality of a dream which the sleeper knows must have occurred, still-born and complete, in a second, yet the very quality upon which it must depend to move the dreamer (verisimilitude) to credulity--horror or pleasure or amazement--depends as completely upon a formal recognition of and acceptance of elapsed and yet-elapsing time as music or a printed tale. (AA 22)

In a dream everything occurs in "one constant and perpetual instant" (AA 142). One acknowledges, perhaps, but does not sense the passage of time. After the death of Bon, Rosa has the feeling of waking into a reality which has become suffused with the timelessness of the dream, "a time altered to fit the dream which, conjunctive with the dreamer, becomes immolated and apotheosized. . ." (AA 141). Sutpen's face exudes this time-defying dream quality which constitutes, perhaps, the essence of legend:[51] ". . . not approaching, not swimming up out of the gloom, but already there, rocklike and

firm and antedating time and house and doom and all. . . ." (AA 136).

Faulkner's narrative method in Absalom, Absalom! is inseparable from character and themes. One of the most striking features of the novel is, of course, its four narrators, all participants, to varying degrees, in the drama, and each with his own experiences, intellectual predilections.[52] These narrators, then, not only provide the outward configuration of the novel in revealing the "facts" of the Sutpen story, but themselves dramatize, as Cleanth Brooks notes,[53] the process of its reconstruction.[54] The central problem of the novel in this light becomes one of how to know the past. Facts, evidently, are in themselves insufficient; the application of chronology and causality can not rectify this situation (and can be positively misleading). It is only when interpreted creatively that facts can come to life. Historical truth, then, is a creative construct:[55] each narrator contributes and revises his own hypotheses, and finally, the reader must participate as well in the historical process by examining the evidence and weighing the probabilities for himself. In an interview at the University of Virginia[56] Faulkner asserted the composite nature of truth: the figure of Sutpen incorporates and yet transcends each single interpretation.[57] There is no cogent Sutpen story independent of these acts of imaginative reconstruction.

> . . . Judith, Bon, Henry, Sutpen, all of them. They are there, yet something is missing; they are like a chemical formula, exhumed along with the letters from that forgotten chest, carefully, the paper old and faded and falling to pieces, the writing faded, almost indecipherable, yet meaningful, familiar in shape and sense, the

> name and presence of volatile and sentient forces; you bring them together in the proportions called for, but nothing happens; you re-read, tedious and intent, poring, making sure that you have forgotten nothing, made no miscalculation; you bring them together again and again nothing happens. . . (AA 101).

Isolated facts are nothing more than chemical ingredients; for a reaction to take place, these must be assembled and combined in certain ways, to be determined experimentally.

In the chemical reactions essayed by the narrators of Absalom, Absalom!, it is Sutpen who invariably figures as the catalyst. Brooks suggests that Sutpen is, to a large degree, "an hypothesis put forward to account for several peculiar events"[58] rather than a consistent human personality. In one way, Sutpen has created everyone; in another, he has been entirely created by the interpreters of history, to explain their inheritance: "Yes, shadowy: a myth, a phantom; something which they engendered and created whole themselves . . ." (AA 104).

Elsewhere, the process of historical interpretation is compared to the piecing together of a jigsaw puzzle, the integers of which must be placed in a particular pattern in order to be recognized and understood.[59] This analogy suggests not only the participatory nature of history (history as process rather than as a series of accomplished facts), but its simultaneity: the pieces exist at once. A chronological arrangement of events becomes merely an academic exercise when past, present and future are simultaneously present. While the idea of a jigsaw puzzle suggests the timeless nature of the historical image, it fails to account for the organic relationship between the perceived and perceiver by implying that the

facts are related, finally, to a single particular pattern. The use of the four narrators and, by implication, the reader himself, would suggest, rather, the ongoing nature of interpretation.

Thomas Sutpen, then, is not simply one of those characters discussed in chapter three who attempt to erect some kind of barricade against the process of finite linear time. Nor is he merely a legend of the Colonel Sartoris variety, hovering above his descendants as a blueprint for the present and the future. Sutpen operates on several levels with respect to time; the vision of time which he reveals in operation and the vision of time he explicitly professes are, in effect, opposing ones. Sutpen is expressly committed to a battle with finite time. His design is directed, spatially and temporally, toward creating a legend which will eradicate his own mortality. This design, inevitably, fails. Ironically, however, he himself becomes a legend--the legend of a man bent on creating a legend, committing ineradicable, timeless crimes against humanity in order to do so. While his conscious design fails to counterbalance finite time, he himself ultimately succeeds; the figure of Thomas Sutpen transcends his own lifetime, both as a progenitor of guilt in his descendants and as a personification of the fall of the South. Sutpen's story is a personification of the process by which crime is transmitted. It presents historical time under two aspects: first, as contained in moments of timelessness which encompass past, present and future in images of frozen motion,[60] and secondly as having, in a broader view, a generally cyclical configuration--from the dust-to-dust cycle of an individual life[61]

to the collective inheritance of guilt and the need for atonement.

If Absalom, Absalom! deals with the relationship of man and history by exploring the nature of an event in time, Go Down, Moses, and particularly "The Bear," finds the intersection of finite and infinite time in ritual, especially that derived from nature.[62] By means of ritual, a conscious re-enactment of some natural principle, the finite span of human time gains significance--it is made, in a sense, to extend at once into the past and the future. Ritual assures us that time is indeed indivisible, that the past is not irrevocably lost, and that man can partake of natural time. The hunt is the supreme example of such a ritual; it is the "ancient and unremitting contest according to the ancient and immitigable rules which voided all regrets and brooked no quarter. . ." (GDM 192). By means of the hunt, man's sources in nature are confirmed; he ceases to be a mortal creature which exists briefly on a linear time line, but shares, as do the animals he hunts, the eternal presence of nature.

In pitting man against the "wild immortal spirit" (GDM 192) of the wilderness, the hunt does not signify a basic enmity between man and nature, but constitutes, rather, a salute to the eternal "virtues of cunning and strength and speed" (GDM 192) required on both sides. The hunter must demonstrate, in the yearly pageant of the hunt, "the will and hardihood to endure and the humility and skill to survive." It is the wilderness itself which is the final arbiter of these virtues: the "name and state of hunter" must be earned from it.[63]

The essence of natural time, according to the rituals of

Go Down, Moses, is to be found in blood; as in Hawthorne, the importance of blood to time consciousness in Faulkner can scarcely be overstated.[64] The spilling of blood sets in motion the eternal cycle of nature:

> Think of all the blood that has happened here, on this earth. All the blood hot and strong for living, pleasuring, that has soaked back into it. . . . And the earth don't just want to keep things, hoard them; it wants to use them again. (GDM 186)

In this sense, there is no death in natural time, only transformation; absorption by rebirth into the natural cycles vitiates finite time. Although Sam Fathers may age and die, he is "not vanished but merely translated into the myriad life . . . not held fast in earth and not in earth but of earth, myriad yet undiffused of every myriad part. . ." (GDM 328). It is for this reason that Old Ben's paw is buried: "certainly, they would give him his paw back. . ." (GDM 329). Old Ben, like the "timeless woods," exists in infinite time in that he has no beginning. He embodies an eternal principle and cannot be considered "even a mortal beast but an anachronism indomitable and invincible out of an old dead time, a phantom, epitome and apotheosis of the old wild life. . ." (GDM 193). Yet, although both Old Ben and the wilderness are inimical to clock time, and exude a sense of timelessness, they are doomed. Evidently, although nature's creatures are mortal, nature itself constitutes a timeless unity, impelled by a kind of life force, of which Sam, Old Ben and Lion are the finite representatives. They alone are "taintless and incorruptible" (GDM 191), because through their veins courses the life-blood of the wilderness: ". . . there was something running in Sam Fathers'

veins which ran in the veins of the buck too. . ." (GDM 350).

In "Delta Autumn," the "brooding and immemorial tangle" has been reduced to a solitary triangle, "one tremendous density of brooding and inscrutable impenetrability": "He had watched it, not being conquered, destroyed, so much as retreating since its purpose was served now and its time an outmoded time. . ." (GDM 343). Indeed, the wilderness, like Old Ben, is anachronistic in a world of "ruthless mile-wide parallelograms" (GDM 342). As Ike, now an old man, remembers the past, it seems to him that the land retreats, not in space but in time. The wilderness is continually referred to as both "timeless" and "doomed." For Ike, this is not ultimately paradoxical. Certainly, "man's puny gnawing at the immemorial flank" (GDM 195) has cumulatively brought about irreversible changes in its physical form. But the wilderness belongs to the timelessness of nature: its associated virtues are eternal, and constitute an undiminishing part of man's inheritance. Perpetually present in the human consciousness, the wilderness is to be perceived, not as events nor as objects but rather as a series of timeless images of pure motion. The buck that Ike kills, for example, "still and forever leaped" (GDM 178). The wilderness is eternally vital, and forever renders man's attempts to encroach upon it a kind of motion "without appreciable progress." The logging train, for example, with its "illusion of frantic rapidity" does not approach the woods; it merely elongates itself (GDM 321).[65] The surrey carrying the hunters ceases to move, "dwarfed by that perspective into an almost ridiculous diminishment" (GDM 195). The wilderness temporally eludes man's

spatial affronts.

It is through blood that Ike becomes officially united with the timeless wilderness. After he kills his first deer, his true father bequeaths this heritage; in so doing, Sam transcends his own mortality, and Ike gains a past, a timeless source in nature.[66]

> They were the white boy, marked forever, and the old dark man sired on both sides by savage kings, the first worthy blood which he had been found at last worthy to draw, joining him and the man forever, so that the man would continue to live past the boy's seventy years, and then eighty years, long after the man himself had entered the ground. (GDM 165)

Blood, thus, overrules chronological time. Ike's contact with the wilderness, for example, leads him to feel that "at the age of ten he was witnessing his own birth" (GDM 195). Indeed, as this relationship continues, chronology is reversed altogether: ". . . born into his father's old age and himself born old and became steadily younger and younger until . . . he had acquired something of a young boy's high and selfless innocence. . ." (GDM 106). His experience of Old Ben which represents for him the attainment of manhood, has the timeless quality of the dream, in which the bear extends infinitely into the past: "the bear. . . had run in his listening and loomed in his dreams since before he could remember. . ." (GDM 200). The bear pre-dates measured time, having its source in "the limbo from which time emerged and became time" (GDM 204). The spatial properties which characterize the bear's appearances parallel the time frame-work in which it exists. It has no identifiable beginning: "Then he saw the bear. It did not emerge, appear: it was just there" (GDM 209); and no ending: "Then it was gone. . . . It faded . . . without

motion. . ." (GDM 209). The bear is "dimensionless" in both space and time. It has existed forever, and simply fades in and out of the present at will.[67] The ultimate vision of nature and the static motion it contains is Ike's dream of death as a timeless dimension into which he and the wilderness are simultaneously apotheosized.

> . . . the two spans running out together, not toward oblivion, nothingness, but into a dimension free of both time and space . . . the names, the faces of the old men he had known and loved and for a little while outlived, moving again among the shades of tall unaxed trees and sightless brakes where the wild strong immortal game ran forever before the tireless belling immortal hounds, falling and rising phoenix-like to the soundless guns. (GDM 354)

It is significant that the genealogy of the wilderness to which Ike is joined goes back to Sam's Indian predecessors[68] but does not include white or back men. Both are tainted--the former by the illusion that land or men can be owned; the latter by the fact of bondage.[69] McCaslin explains to Ike the denial of natural time represented by the white man: "When [Sam] was born, all his blood on both sides, except the little white part, knew things that had been tamed out of our blood so long ago that we have not only forgotten them, we have to live together in herds to protect ourselves from our own sources" (GDM 167). The white man's lack of harmony with the traditions prescribed by nature is seen in his pursuit of farming, which consumes and destroys, rather than hunting, which glorifies, by ancient prerogative, the bond between man and the wilderness.[70] The white vision of time, then, as was discussed in chapter three, generally tends to deny the organic relationship of past to present--a mechanized, spatialized view which is perfectly able

to consider a pastless future. The possessor of white blood is not automatically compatible with natural time; like Ike, he must be educated by some agent of nature. Ike's absorption into this kind of time is "not contemporary with his first breath, but transmitted to him. . ." (GDM 354). Ritual marks stages in this education.

Ritual plays an altogether less beneficent role in the first three stories of Go Down, Moses than in "Old People" and "The Bear." In these former, ritual is the vehicle by which the racial curse of the South is perpetuated in succeeding generations. As a set of formalized responses between the races, this kind of ritual denies individuality,[71] and so immortalizes the crimes of the past. The configuration of time to be seen in such ritual is, of course, cyclical--each generation, as in Absalom, Absalom!, inherits guilt and the need for expiation.

> Then one day the old curse of his fathers, the old ancestral pride based not on any value but on an accident of geography, stemmed not from courage and honour but from wrong and shame, descended to him. (GDM 111)

If blood, in terms of the hunt, represents man's cyclical link with the timelessness of nature, it also represents in Faulkner this cycle of crime and guilt:[72] ". . . the old unsleeping blood that had vanished into the earth they trod still cried out for vengeance" (AA 251). Nature does not simply absorb the blood of its creatures, but recirculates it. While the past may not be simply a pattern for the future, the link between past and future is undeniable.

Sartoris, Absalom, Absalom! and Go Down, Moses all place finite human time in juxtaposition with the cyclical time of nature,

and, with varying degrees of emphasis, explore those processes which link the past, present and future, on an individual and a social level. Invariably, an incorporation into natural time is seen to preclude the obsessions with clock time and finitude generally, which haunt the characters discussed in chapter three. The Negro in Sartoris and the hunter in Go Down, Moses are absorbed into the rhythms of nature, in which time passing is not an irrevocable step closer to oblivion, but rather a movement towards renewal and rebirth. The White vision of time operates collectively much as Jason Compson's does individually--it is a linear model, the finite nature of which not only dictates a certain haste, as in Sutpen's design, but which reduces everything to a meaningless "frantic and bootless vainglory" (GDM 320). Assaults upon the "immemorial woodsface" (GDM 320) cut man off from a timeless past and can only exacerbate his sense of mortality and lack of individual identity with respect to time. The "men with plows and axes" are "myriad and nameless even to one another in the land where the old bear had earned a name" (GDM 193).

Both the Sartoris and Sutpen legends act on the consciousness in ways which transcend finite linear time. The former uses the past (involuntarily) as a precise pattern for the present, thus eliminating any need to experience the present. The future does not even exist as a possibility in this construction. In one sense, the Sartoris legend, as it is inculcated into the daily lives of the family descendants, establishes a cyclical model, which, though based on death, reappears in each generation, and thus mitigates against finite time. However, in another sense, the mere reiteration of the

past does not, in itself, enrich the present--because the Sartoris legend derives from death, the past becomes a trap for the individual Sartoris, and the family as a whole is headed on a finite linear course toward complete destruction.

The Sutpen legend is rather different because it involves periodic, complete denials of the past, in order to create artificially a past from the future. Both the reliving and the rejection of the past are seen to be negations of natural time. Although both establish cycles, these are not the cycles of a nature renewing itself, but rather, constitute a curse by which crimes extend beyond the mortal time spans of their perpetrators. It is clear that both the Sartoris and the Sutpen stories are analogues to the history of the South. The process of analogy is seen in Absalom, Absalom! to be intrinsic in the formulation of history because it links the present and past, the individual and the social, in a creative, collaborative way.

FOOTNOTES--CHAPTER IV

[1]See Vickery's distinction between history which, she says, derives from cause and effect, and myth or legend which derive from human actions. In both cases, she finds chronology to be relatively unimportant; what is significant is the larger temporal and causal pattern into which, in retrospect, the event can be seen to fit. Vickery, The Novels of William Faulkner: A Critical Interpretation (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1964).

[2]Adams, Faulkner: Myth and Motion.

[3]See also Absalom, Absalom!. As Miss Rosa gives her account of Sutpen, she becomes increasingly ethereal and insubstantial, a mere voice, as he achieves a kind of solid, present reality; the legend is more vivid and commanding of the present than any teller of the legend. "Meanwhile, as though in inverse ratio to the vanishing voice, the invoked ghost of the man whom she could neither forgive nor revenge herself upon began to assume a quality almost of solidity, permanence" (AA 13).

[4]Frequently in Faulkner, the scent of flowers symbolizes some kind of relationship with the past. Note the odour of verbena in The Unvanquished, which evokes the past glory of the South (and death). Faulkner discusses the verbena as a living "accolade of optimism" in his April 28, 1958 interview at the University of Virginia, in Frederick L. Gwynn and Joseph L. Blotner, eds., Faulkner in the University: Class Conferences at the University of Virginia, 1957-1958 (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1959), pp. 255-256. The odour of honeysuckle and roses in The Sound and the Fury haunts Quentin with the sense of lost innocence. The oversweet smell of "twice-bloomed wistaria" in Absalom, Absalom! is a perpetual reminder to Quentin of the victory of the past over the present in Rosa Coldfield's life, and to Rosa herself of "that short brief unreturning springtime of the female heart" (AA 144). She regards it as a symbol of the physical nature of memory. "Once there was--Do you mark how the wistaria, sun-impacted on the wall here, distills and penetrates this room as though (light-unimpeded) by secret and attritive progress from mote to mote of obscurity's myriad components: That is the substance of remembering--sense, sight, smell . . . --Once there was a summer of wistaria" (AA 143).

[5]It is this trap, wherein the past becomes the future, which constitutes the "curse" of the Sartoris family; a curse simply embodies the death-imparting heritage of legend. The passage of time after the death of Colonel Sartoris serves to "stiffen and shape that which sprang from him into the fatal semblance of his dream. . ." (Sar 35). Thus the "curse" which is extended in cyclical

fashion through the generations, becomes operative. See Maule's curse in Hawthorne's The House of the Seven Gables. "'God,' said the dying man, pointing his finger with a ghastly look at the undismayed countenance of his enemy, 'God will give him blood to drink.'" The House of the Seven Gables (New York: Norton, 1967), p. 8.

[6]In his preface to The House of the Seven Gables, Hawthorne describes the work as a Legend, "prolonging itself from an epoch now gray in the distance, down into our own broad daylight." The legend is the revitalization, the re-illumination, of the historical fact, which thus becomes available to the present. Ibid., p. 2.

[7]The fact that legend depends for its colour and glamour on distancing in time is clearly an element of young Bayard's despair: it does not seem to be as easy to be heroic in the present as it was in the past. His brother's death in a machine and his own obsession with mechanized speed seem contrived and joyless when compared to the legendary exploits, spontaneous and exuberant, of his ancestors. Bayard regards legend not as symbol but as code.

[8]Sartre, Literary Essays, p. 84.

[9]The concept of anachronism suggests, of course, that ritual cannot in itself halt the process of time. In the anachronistic can be found the source of much of Faulkner's humour, and perhaps, also, his sense of tragedy.

[10]"'Will', he said, 'what the devil were you folks fighting about, anyhow?' 'Bay', old man Falls answered, 'be damned if I ever did know'" (Sar 58).

[11]See also her skeptical comment on the Civil War: "The war just gave John a good excuse to get himself killed. . ." (Sar 41). This suggests that the Sartoris legend is the contrived justification for a death-wish rather than that it issues from any innate heroic impulses or courage. Similarly, the war, according to Miss Jenny, has made a fool out of young Bayard. "I'll declare, men can't seem to stand anything" (Sar 58).

[12]Miss Jenny's love-hate relationship with the Sartorises, it will be noticed, is reminiscent of Quentin's attitude to the South. She says, "I'll declare, sometimes I just lose patience with you folks; wonder what crime I seem to be expiating by having to live with you" (Sar 189), and yet can take pride in her association with them: "'I danced a valse with him in Baltimore in '58', and here voice was proud and still as banners in the dust" (Sar 32).

[13]Dale Sorenson, "Structure in William Faulkner's Sartoris: The Contrast Between Psychological and Natural Time," Arizona Quarterly, 25 (Autumn 1969), pp. 264-270.

[14]The difference between legend as a time structure that enhances the present and legend as a death trap for the present is at the basis of the contrast between Miss Jenny and Drusilla in The Unvanquished (New York: Random House, 1938), hereafter cited as U in parentheses within the body of the text. Drusilla interprets the heroic past as a pattern for death, and in death uncompromisingly finds the only real manifestation of heroic intent. "There are not many dreams in the world, but there are a lot of human lives. And one human life or two dozen--" (U 257). She exudes, for Bayard, the scent of death, the odor of verbena, sprigs of which she continually bestows on him to establish a kind of objective correlative of death and vengeance. ". . . again the scent of verbena in her hair seemed to have increased a hundred times as she stood holding out to me, one in either hand, the two duelling pistols" (U 273). For Bayard, this "passionate and voracious exaltation" represents a lack of respect for human life; his solution is to fulfill the formal requirements of the revenge code by going to face his enemy, but going unarmed. Miss Jenny, unlike Drusilla, insists that personal fulfillment is more important than ritual for its own sake. She insists that Bayard be convinced within himself of the necessity to confront his father's killer. "Don't let it be Drusilla, a poor hysterical young woman. And don't let it be him Bayard, because he's dead now. And don't let it be George Wyatt and the others who will be waiting for you tomorrow morning. I know you are not afraid" (U 276). It is ironic that Drusilla, whose attachment to the ideal of heroic death is fanatical, has rejected the traditional role of the Southern woman as the protected, over whom wars are fought and men demonstrate their courage. Her mother, Aunt Louisa, considers Drusilla to be "flouting and outraging all Southern principles of purity and womanhood that our husbands had died for. . ." (U 222).

[15]As a group, Faulkner's women often seem to embody a larger sense of time than his men. Possessed of a closer association with the cycles of nature, (and hence a sort of earth wisdom), they tend less towards the construction of abstract systems than men, and frequently reveal almost a timelessness. ". . . maybe times are never strange to women; that it is just one continuous monotonous thing full of the repeated follies of their menfolk" (Sar 223). See also Rosa Coldfield's definition of time, which is so reminiscent of that embodied by the Negroes (and by the mule): "I waited not for light but for that doom which we call female victory which is: endure and then endure, without rhyme or reason or hope of reward--and then endure. . ." (AA 144).

[16]See Irving Howe, "The Southern Myth and William Faulkner," American Quarterly 3, pp. 357-362.

[17]Robert Scholes, "Myth and Manners in Sartoris," Georgia Review, 16 (Summer 1962), pp. 195-201, has suggested that the method of Sartoris is that of the novel of manners wherein people, in a

society recognizably located in time and space can be distinguished and judged by their willingness to live up to certain proper modes of action. This view would imply that attitude to the past is central to the arrangement of characters within the nove. While Scholes does oppose George O'Donnell's view that the Sartoris family possesses a "vital social code" because its fall is counterpoised precisely by the rise of the unethical Snopeses, he does see the decline of the Sartorises in terms of an opposition between a romantic past and a sordid present, a contrast largely developed by means of distinctions in manners.

[18]Sorenson points out the contrast between the two Christmas scenes of the novel as establishing the polar functions of tradition: one, life-giving, the other, death-dealing. The first Bayard gets killed at Christmas in a daring raid to capture a jar of anchovies behind enemy lines. Thus, his glorious death is celebrated in the Sartoris family tradition. Young Bayard spends his Christmas with a Negro family; emphasized in their celebration is the "timeless cycle of hope" (Sar 264) for all humanity. They invite Bayard to share in the present, thus providing an alternative response to the past.

[19]A glowing tribute to the mule suggests that even this despised creature has a more efficacious means of dealing with time and change than does young Bayard. The mule has no compulsion to concern himself with either heredity ("Father and mother he does not resemble. . ." --Sar 226) or abstract interpretation. Well equipped to deal with a life of daily contradiction, he remains "steadfast to the land. . . because of his venomous and patient preoccupation with the immediate present. . ." (Sar 226).

[20]Vickery, The Novels of William Faulkner, pp. 213-225.

[21]For all his violent activity, young Bayard remains unable to act in the present; rather, he merely reacts to the past; The same observation might be made of Joe Christmas. Most of the other Faulknerian characters obsessed with finite time seem powerless to function effectively in the present, either preferring words to deeds lik Quentin and Darl, or repeatedly midjudging the means necessary to achieve a particular end, like Jason.

[22]In The Sound and the Fury, Mr. Compson was referring to the self-destructive natures of battles against time when he said that no battle was ever won. Similarly, Quentin describes Sutpen as "the old wornout cannon which realizes that it can deliver just one more fierce shot and crumble to dust in its own furious blast and recoil" (AA 181).

[23]As has been discussed in chapter three above, Quentin himself sees clocks and calendars as his enemies, and devises systems whereby these might be neutralized. The fact that the Quentin

who listens to, reacts to and attempts to understand Sutpen's story is the same person who, in The Sound and the Fury, will commit suicide a year later to save himself and his ideals from finite time, lends an added significance to Faulkner's narrative technique.

[24]Mr. Compson in The Sound and the Fury, p. 96.

[25]". . . he himself seeing his own father and sisters and brothers as the owner, the rich man (not the nigger) must have been seeing them all the time--as cattle, creatures heavy and without grace, brutely evacuated into a world without hope or purpose for them, who would in turn spawn with brutish and vicious prolixity, populate, double treble and compound. . ." (AA 235).

[26]According to Volpe, A Reader's Guide to William Faulkner (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1964), "the theme of Absalom, Absalom! is rejection and its moral consequences," p. 211. Each victim then feels compelled to perpetrate the crime of rejection in order to avenge his sense of individual identity.

[27]". . . he seemed to kind of dissolve and part of him turn and rush back through the two years they had lived there. . ." pp. 229-230.

[28]in Faulkner Studies (Summer 1953), pp. 20ff.

[29]Ibid., Thomas defines his term "memory-narrative" as "an outflow of incidents from the memory which group themselves as the context around a particular person or event but which, since the mind at first recovers only an essence of that person or event, do not come forth in regular narrative sequence," p. 20. Thomas goes on to suggest that while regular narrative arrives at its point, memory-narrative commences with its point.

[30]She continually refers to Sutpen as the devil, and his offspring as having a "devil's heritage" (AA 135). Note Bon's description in his letter to Judith of the war as the timeless extension of a single shot. It is a nightmare version of Grecian Urn time. ". . . there was that one fusillade four years ago which sounded once and then was arrested, mesmerized raised muzzle by raised muzzle, in the frozen attitude of its own aghast amazement . . ." (AA 131).

[31]For Rosa, the "might-have-been" constitutes a dimension of time which is frequently more real than the "was". See AA, pp. 143, 149-150.

[32]This is, of course, almost the definition of "curse".

[33]His design was not, however, motiveless; the original pebble must have been the first man to deny the humanity of another.

Sutpen's later repudiation of Eulalia and Bon are ripples, removed in space but not, essentially, in time.

[34]Sutpen, wholly egocentric, is innocent, too, of the fact that other individuals with designs of their own are attempting to control the future. A design which assumes exclusivity is fundamentally wrong-headed. See Judith's very striking analysis of time as a sort of communal loom. ". . . all in one another's way like five or six people all trying to make a rug on the same loom only each one wants to weave his own pattern into the rug; and it cant matter, you know that, or the Ones that set up the loom would have arranged things a little better. . ." (AA 127).

[35]Volpe notes that Bon would have been satisfied simply by some gesture of recognition on the part of his father. Sutpen's refusal even to acknowledge the past sets into motion the process of revenge. Volpe, A Reader's Guide, p. 209.

[36]Mr. Compson thinks of Wash as having seen Sutpen as an image of pure and timeless movement, which is more than faintly reminiscent of the Grecian Urn. ". . . still hearing the galloping, watching the proud galloping image merge and pass, galloping through avatars which marked the accumulation of years, time, to the fine climax where it galloped without weariness or progress, forever and forever immortal beneath the brandished sabre and the shot-torn flags rushing down a sky in color like thunder. . ." (AA 288).

[37]See the first appearance of Flem Snopes in The Hamlet. He simply appears, and begins to set in motion the forces of Snopesism.

[38]". . . that respectability which, according to General Compson, consisted in Sutpen's secret mind of a great deal more than the mere acquisition of a chatelaine for his house" (AA 37).

[39]Faulkner continually refers to the desire "to make that scratch, that undying mark on the blank face of the oblivion to which we are all doomed" (AA 129) as one of man's most basic motivations.

[40]Time as a cyclical configuration (dust to dust) is rather amusingly treated in the figure of Mink Snopes, who is obsessed with the idea that the earth is waiting to re-absorb the unwary. As a result, Mink will not sleep directly on the ground. The Mansion (New York: Vintage Books, 1962), p. 402.

[41]Similarly, Mr. Compson describes virginity as a quality which "must incorporate in itself an inability to endure in order to be precious, to exist, and so must depend upon its loss, absence, to have existed at all" (AA 96). Miss Rosa describes love as contingent upon death: Because he was to die; I know that, knew that,

as both pride and peace were: else how to prove love's immortality?" (AA 150).

[42]See Sartoris. "Was. Fatality: the augury of man's destiny peeping out at him from the roadside hedge, if he but recognize it. . ." (Sar 88).

[43]In Absalom, Absalom!, as in Sartoris, Faulkner frequently uses theatre images to describe relationships with the past--historical and legendary. Fate is described, for example, as the stage manager of the Sutpen play. ". . . while he was still playing the scene to the audience, behind him Fate, destiny, retribution, irony--the stage manager, call him what you will--was already striking the set and dragging on the synthetic and spurious shadows and shapes of the next one." (AA 72-73)

[44]See also Miss Rosa's description of her childhood as an unnatural condition, sealed off from time, and light--indeed, from life. ". . . instead of accomplishing the processional and measured milestones of the childrhood's time I lurked, unapprehended as though, shod with the very damp and velvet silence of the womb, I displaced no air, gave off no betraying sound, from one closed forbidden door to the next and so acquired all I knew of that light and space in which people moved and breathed as I (that same child) might have gained conception of the sun from seeing it through a piece of smoky glass. . ." (AA 145).

[45]It is by means of a process of analogy that Quentin interprets the Civil War was the necessary act of atonement by the South for the crimes of Thomas Sutpen. ". . . only through the blood of our men and the tears of our women could He stay this demon and efface his name and lineage from the earth" (AA 11). One may not perhaps arrive at the whole truth by means of analogy, but the significance of the past can partially be explained in this way.

[46]"It was a part of his twenty years' heritage of breathing the same air and hearing his father talk about the man Sutpen; a part of the town's--Jefferson's--eighty years' heritage of the same air which the man himself had breathed between this September afternoon in 1909 and that Sunday morning in June in 1833. . ." (AA 11).

[47]Vickery suggests that doom for Faulkner is to be found in the interaction between natural and human time, which in its simplest terms is synonymous with death. While this definition does point to the clash between the linear and cyclical views of time, the one finite and the other infinite, it fails to appreciate the idea of fate as the process by which past, present and future are linked. Fate does not equal death; it transcends it.

[48]"There are actually few instances in modern fiction of

a more perfect adaptation of form to matter and of an intricacy that justifies itself at every point through the significance and intensity which it makes possible." Cleanth Brooks, "History, Tragedy and the Imagination in Absalom, Absalom!," Yale Review, 52 (Spring 1963), pp. 340-351.

[49]Thomas, "Memory-Narrative in Absalom, Absalom!," Faulkner Studies, II no. 2 (Summer 1953).

[50]John Hagan, "Déjà-Vu and the Effect of Timelessness in Faulkner's Absalom, Absalom!," Bucknell Review, XI (March 1963), p. 34. "Identity of meaning serves to bind together happenings widely separated in time; it makes them into repetitions of one and the same happening, which thus loses its 'past' character and becomes a perennial possibility." According to Hagan, Faulkner has carefully paralleled and prefigured events, and cites Bergson's description of the sensation of déjà vu in Revue Philosophique, December 1908, pp. 561-562: One supposes "...that he is living again, down to the minutest details, some moments of his past life."

[51]Note that other of Faulkner's legendary creatures are similarly described, for example Old Ben and Colonel Sartoris.

[52]Miss Rosa interprets the past exclusively as a kind of morality play, in which Sutpen embodies absolute evil. Mr. Compson sees the Sutpen story as a classical tragedy, and Sutpen himself as the flawed hero of such dramas. Quentin and Shreve find neither of these forms to be wholly satisfactory. Thus, they attempt to discover less categorical ways of revealing historical truth, the former impelled by a peculiarly intense, personal concern with time past as it relates to the South, and the latter by a kind of detached and rational curiosity about both his room-mate and the violent events of the Sutpen story. See Cleanth Brooks, "History, Tragedy and the Imagination in Absalom, Absalom!

[53]Ibid.

[54]For a discussion of the perceiver as actor, see Caroline Gordon, "Notes on Faulkner and Flaubert," The Hudson Review, 1 (Summer 1948), pp. 222-231.

[55]The German historian, von Ranke, located the historical discipline between art and science. It is based on a framework of facts as other sciences, but demands creative participation as in other artistic endeavours. "History is distinguished from all other sciences in that it is, at the same time, also an art. It is a science in so far as it collects, finds, permeates; Art in so far as it reconstructs and shapes and gives representation to what is found, recognized." Quoted in Helen Liebel, "Ranke's Fragments on Universal History," Clio, February, 1973.

[56]Faulkner in the University, pp. 273-274. "But the truth I would like to think, comes out, that when the reader has read all these thirteen different ways of looking at the blackbird, the reader has his own fourteenth image of that blackbird which I would like to think is the truth." Ibid., p. 274.

[57]Rosa is not unjustified in seeing Sutpen as evil, but this is hardly a comprehensive view. He has elements of the tragic hero, but Mr. Compson's conception of him is inadequate as well.

[58]Cleanth Brooks, "History, Tragedy and the Imagination in Absalom, Absalom!."

[59]". . . aware of the jigsaw puzzle picture, integers of it waiting, almost lurking, just beyond his reach, inextricable, jumbled, and unrecognizable yet on the point of falling into a pattern which would reveal to him at once, like a slash of light, the meaning of his whole life, past. . ." (AA 313).

[60]The moments comprise our means of access to the past. By means of them, we are able to experience, not simply remember, the past.

[61]See Hightower's "wheel of time" image in Light in August, p. 462.

[62]Critical commentary on the types and uses of myth and ritual in "The Bear" has not been lacking. Lewis M. Dabney, The Indians of Yoknapatawpha: A Study in Literature and History (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1974), finds elements of specific religious and folk myths used to present the image of an ideal society. For a study of "The Bear" as a composite of two short story types--completed background myth and "initiation-recognition" ritual--see Roy B. West, "Hemingway and Faulkner - Two Masters of the Short Story," in The Short Story in America 1900-1950, pp. 85-106. See also John Lyndenberg. "Nature Myth in Faulkner's 'The Bear'," American Literature, 24 (March 1952), pp. 62-72. Apparently there does not exist a complete study of the self-conscious immersion into ritual on the part of a character as a means, primarily, of formalizing his time consciousness.

[63]Ike senses the moral responsibility of the hunder on the occasion of his formal baptism into the wilderness: "I slew you; my bearing must not shame your quitting life. My conduct forever onward must become your death" (GDM 351).

[64]For a detailed examination of the way blood and genealogy inform Faulkner's view of history, see W. Litz, "Genealogy as Symbol in Go Down, Moses," Faulkner Studies, Winter 1952, p. 49ff.

[65]For an analysis of the motion of a body in time as reveal-

ing a kind of elastic extensibility, see Bergson, pp. 26-27.

[66]Volpe discusses three patterns of time, in effect, three blood lines available to Ike through Uncle Buck, Cass Edmonds and Sam Fathers. A Reader's Guide, p. 241.

[67]It is interesting that Old Ben's appearances out of the background of the woods are compared to the activities of a "huge old bass" that, like Quentin's trout in The Sound and the Fury is relatively static in its environment. GDM, p. 209.

[68]"His father was Ikkemotubbe himself, who had named himself Doom" (GDM 165). See Dabney.

[69]Because of the betrayal of "the blood of the warriors and chiefs" (GDM 168) represented in the white and black blood on his mother's side, Sam Fathers becomes "himself his own battleground, the scene of his own vanquishment and the mausoleum of his defeat" (GDM 168). Volpe finds the unity of Go Down, Moses in the exploration of inherited guilt and race relations. See Volpe, p. 409, n.1.

[70]Faulkner comments on the struggle between Old Ben and the hunters, as well as the basic enmity between society and the wilderness, in an interview at the University of Virginia, Faulkner in the University, pp. 276-277. For an interpretation of "The Bear" as a conflict between society and the wilderness, see W.R. Moses, "Where History Crosses Myth: Another Reading of 'The Bear'," Accent, XIII (Winter 1953), pp. 21-32. That the white man operates in opposition to nature and its cycles is nowhere more clearly presented than in Roth's killing of a doe, at once an unnatural act which destroys nature's time continuum in eliminating its progenitive future and an act inimically opposed to the ritual of the hunt.

[71]This is as life-denying and contrary to nature as the Sartoris curse, which is based on an inheritance of death.

[72]It is interesting that these two aspects of blood are united in Ike's speculations in "Delta Autumn" about the hunt from God's point of view. "But he said, 'I will give him his change. I will give him warning and foreknowledge too, along with the desire to follow and the power to slay. The woods and fields he ravages and the game he devastates will be the consequence and signature of his crime and guilt, and his punishment" (GDM 349). The instinct to hunt thus has a timeless, sacred derivation--God has foreseen and in effect sanctioned it. However, this view of the hunt as a manifestation of man's essentially sinful nature is, surely, a curiously negative one in the light of Ike's earlier affirmations of the hunt as a ritualistic dramatization of certain eternal virtues. See, for example, GDM 192; also Faulkner's analysis of the hunt in Faulkner in the University, pp. 271-272. One must,

of course, bear in mind that Ike's attachment to the wilderness renders his images of man increasingly acerbic; human civilization represents, for him, a debasement of nature. "No wonder the ruined woods I used to know dont cry for retribution! he thought. The people who have destroyed it will accomplish its revenge" (GDM 364). The grand-daughter of Tennie's Jim goes so far as to suggest that Ike is no longer capable of understanding human relationships. "'Old man,' she said, 'have you lived so long and forgotten so much that you dont remember anything you ever knew or felt or even heard about love?'" (GDM 363).

CHAPTER V--CONCLUSION

It is a commonplace that the novels of William Faulkner reflect an extraordinary concern with time both in their thematic concerns and structural execution. The relationship between character and time consciousness has, however, not been fully explored. In his article, "Temps et Personne chez William Faulkner,"[1] M. LeBreton finds the derangements of time in Faulkner to be associated with aberrations of personality. The confusion of past and present, so frequently exhibited by the Faulknerian character, he argues, constitutes an inability to distinguish between the Me and the Not-me. Clearly, Breton's assertions have some validity as applied to characters like Rosa Coldfield and Hightower, who arrest time at a particular moment in the past, and live thereafter solely within the confines of that moment. The continuum of time from the future into the present and the past has been dramtically dislocated, with the result that both Rosa and Hightower cease to react meaningfully in the present. Rosa realizes that this lack of present in a sense constitutes death; Mr. Compson describes her as a ghost. In the course of Light in August, Hightower comes to understand that he, too, is a ghost; he has stopped time at the moment of his grandfather's death as an abnegation of the present and its multiple demands for action.[2] To live in the past, as if it were the present, like Miss Emily,[3] or to mould the present to replicate the past, as in the case of young Bayard Sartoris, are justifiably described as neurotic behavior. But, while Breton's concept of "derangement" does suggest

a close correlation between the character and his vision of time, the latter a symptom of disease in the former, he does not specify the kind of time consciousness likely to be found in the well-adjusted individual, nor the extent to which the past overlaps the present for such a character. Certainly, chronology does not constitute an absolute standard of time; to the contrary, those characters who fail to differentiate between clock time and real time, both psychological (internal) and natural (external), are seen to be at best misguided, at worst alienated and inhumane, like Jason.

The time sense of a Dilsey would suggest, in contrast, the continuous nature of real time. Time as Bergsonian duration cannot be divided into discrete, measurable moments; nor do past, present and future have independent identities. To assume, as Sutpen in Absalom, Absalom! periodically does, that the past can be paid off as a debt and then repudiated utterly, is to imply that there exists an identifiable present moment wherein the past ceases to exist and the future begins to exist.[4] In denying the coexistence of past, present and future, this view rejects the continuity of the human personality which experiences time, and suggests that time is an objective external phenomenon. While the eternal time cycles of nature are external to human consciousness, man does form part of the natural world; the concept of past, present and future as discrete is logically inimical to cyclical time, in which end and beginning are one. Thus, the Faulknerian characters who least experience loss and who are farthest away from the nihilism of a Mr. Compson are those who are most closely associated with natural time.

The individual is mortal, but the nature into which he is absorbed is not.

The definition of Faulkner's attitude toward the past has been a problematic one for his critics, who find an ambivalence similar to that of Quentin as he describes his relationship with the South: "I dont! I dont hate it! I dont hate it! (AA 378). On the one hand, the novels are imbued with a sense of loss, and nostalgia for an almost mythical pre-Civil War South, glamourous and heroic, if fundamentally flawed. The present age seems uniformly cold and anonymous in comparison.[5] Like Sutpen's descent from the mountain, this decline is irreversible: it is Flem Snopes, not Major deSpain, who will manage the affairs of the world henceforth. If, on the other hand, denying the past is not only wrong-headed but morally irresponsible, it is clear that those characters who arrest the flow of time in the past as a counter to finitude are operating in defiance of reality. Evidently, meaningful time is to be found in the process--organic and continually evolving--by which past, present and future are related. The past, therefore, must be acknowledged and understood as it forms, in a cumulative sense, the present. This is, of course, a literary exploration of the time that Bergson attempted to isolate as pure mobility, indivisible and unencumbered by material causality.[6]

Faulkner's most articulate characters--Darl, Quentin, Horace, Gavin, Hightower, Mr. Compson--[7] analyze constantly their relationships to time. Ironically, this rational analysis itself inevitably makes them backward-looking and tends to impede on-going

experience in the present.[8] They sense that time, although a continuous process, does not flow evenly, nor in a particular linear direction. This is perhaps the most significant discovery of the narrators of Absalom, Absalom! who come to find historical meaning not in chronology or causal relationships, but in certain intense moments, often visual in their impact, which absorb all of time, reverberate in all directions in time, and so give the impression of timelessness. Ike's vision of the deer, for example, forever in maximum motion (GDM 164) is decisive not only because it seems to distill the essence of pure movement from material reality, so that the most fleeting becomes instantly the most permanent, but because it governs Ike's time consciousness, altering irrevocably Ike's perception of the present, certainly, as well as of the past and the future. Past, present and future have an altered, significant relationship to one another; as time has an equal forward and backward momentum, the concept of direction loses its rigour.[9] From that moment when Sutpen is sent to the back door of the plantation house, distinctions between his past and future become arbitrary, and the sense that time consists in the progressive tendency of the future to become the past, is nullified.[10]

The images of frozen motion are not be confused with the discrete instants of measured, sequential time:[11] the former contain past, present and future simultaneously, and thus have neither beginning nor ending. Addie posthumously describes the sensation in As I Lay Dying: "But for me it was not over. I mean, over in the sense of beginning and ending, because to me there was no beginning nor

ending to anything then" (AS 167). The simultaneity of all time as distilled in the moment imparts a dream-like quality to the world of the Faulknerian character; he exists in a world impenetrable to the normal tools of rationality.[12] To persist in using these tools exclusively, as does Mr. Compson, is to find the world uniformly absurd. A complete absorption into natural, cyclical time, on the other hand, as in the case of Eula Verner, Lena Grove or Ike Snopes, implies a submersion, indeed an absence, of the power of reason and the capacity for abstraction. This condition presents an ultimate ambiguity: "Then he looked at her, at her grave face which had either nothing in it, or everything, all knowledge" (LA 409). Transcendence over the oppression of finite time must be achieved without conscious effort and rational analysis, or not at all.

The characters between the intellectual despair of Mr. Compson and the pure experience of Ike Snopes on the scale of time consciousness must live with tension: they constantly attempt to resolve their intellectual time constructs with their experiences of time. This process of perpetual adjustment, as it interacts with the reader's own experience of time structures in the novel, is at the very heart of Faulkner's art.

FOOTNOTES--CHAPTER V

[1]M. le Breton, "Temps et Personne chez William Faulkner," Journal de Psychologie Normale et Pathologique (January-June, 1951), 1-2, pp. 344-354.

[2]More dramatically, perhaps, than in the case of any other of Faulkner's characters, Hightower's time consciousness evolves; the repeated use of the wheel of time motif points to this evolution, from a single-minded pursuit of refuge from the ongoing present, to an appreciation that the real significance of time is to be sought in the quantity of "inner" (as Bergson has it) life that it represents. Hightower says to Lena of Byron: "You are probably not much more than half his age. But you have already outlived him twice over" (LA 389). See Bergson, An Introduction to Metaphysics, p. 27.

[3]See "A Rose for Emily," in Collected Stories, pp. 119-130.

[4]Sutpen's is precisely the view of time which Augustine rejects in The Confessions, Book XI, chapters 14-31.

[5]One has only, for example, to compare the worlds of The Unvanquished and Pylon. Although both deal with violence and death, how mechanical and sterile the latter seems in comparison with the former. See also The Reivers, one of Faulkner's most genial and nostalgic works.

[6]Bergson's distinction between science and metaphysics in An Introduction to Metaphysics is clearly to the point in any delineation of the time consciousness in Faulkner's gallery of characters. Science is the realm of the intellect, which must treat the world as fundamentally static; thus, it is an external, measurable medium of expression which analyzes the world in spatial, conceptual, metaphoric terms. At best, science represents reality as a series of discrete images, and so distorts immediably the nature of experience. "But pure duration, on the contrary, excludes all idea of juxtaposition, reciprocal externality, and extension" (p. 26). Metaphysics, on the other hand, derives from the application of intuitive rather than analytical power; hence its unique capacity to deal with "pure mobility." In Bergsonian terms, then, the scientific man, predisposed to apply fixed concepts and to make analytical judgements, barricades himself by means of these intellectual precepts against the "sinuosities" (p. 51) of reality. Within this philosophical framework, Quentin and Hightower are of a scientific, if not empirical bent, while Lena Grove, for example, or Eula Verner, have attained a metaphysical grasp of reality. Although the terms are perhaps distracting, the distinction between the two types of

characters is a real one.

[7]Mr. Compson is predisposed, in The Sound and the Fury to examine the debilitating effects of time on mankind generally. In Absalom, Absalom!, he participates in the historical interpretation undertaken by the narrators, always influenced by his singularly dark vision of time.

[8]This is largely due to the nature of words themselves which function as symbols of that which is past. As Addie suggests in As I Lay Dying, words "go straight up in a thin line" in contrast to real experience which "goes along the earth clinging to it" (AS 165).

[9]See Faulkner's own description of the genesis of The Sound and the Fury in Faulkner in the University, p. 1. According to Faulkner, the novel represents successive attempts to deal with a single timeless image, that of Caddy's muddy drawers as she climbs a tree to look into the parlour.

[10]Although this capacity of the image, the timeless moment, to "capture" time, reflects the fluidity and continuity of Bergsonian duration, the idea that experience may be represented in discrete images is inimical to Bergson, who rejects every spatial, hence visual, device in favour of direct intuitive participation.

[11]To suggest that Faulkner rejects in his literary work spatialized mechanical time, the time implied by the distance between two clock hands, is not to suggest that time and space are unrelated in Faulkner, but rather that time is not dependent on space for its reality, nor is space a material symptom of time. As a powerful aspect of individual consciousness, time frequently has a considerable visual component in Faulkner. As he noted in "The Long Summer" section of The Hamlet, "destinations in time" are sometimes achieved through space. Sutpen's descent from the mountain is, for example, a spatial analogue to the germination of his singular conception of time.

[12]J.J. Mayaux, "La Création du Réel chez William Faulkner," Etudes Anglaises, 5 (February 1952), pp. 25-39, asserts that in Kafka we are placed before the reality of a dream, whereas in Faulkner is created a dream of reality.

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